

MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



VOLUME 3

NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1993



MCM 2 in the Mediterranean

MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



THE MAGAZINE OF THE
MINEWARFARE AND DIVING COMMUNITY

*Front Cover: MCM 2 Squadron Staff, Ships
Companies of ATHERSTONE, CATTISTOCK and
COTTESMORE.*

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CONTENTS

Foreword by Rear Admiral M G Rutherford, Naval Secretary	1
Superintendent of Diving	2
Diving Certificates—Eligibility for civilian diving qualifications	3
Fleet Exercises	4
What's the Caption	5
MAD Drafting	6
MCM 2—Deployment '92	8
Recruitment	11
Dixie's Page	12
Minesweeping Historical—HMS PICKLE	13
Minewarfare Update—(MDC)	14
Training—Short Term Training 'Maldives'	15
Minewarfare Reporter	16
A PO Divers Lot	17
The Alternative Diver	17
So You Want A Draft To A Bomb Team . . .	18
Fishery Protection	21
FDU 2	22
Inspectorate	24
MCM 1 Deployment to the Baltic	26
Diving From The Rock	28
Diving Reporter	29
SNICDU Play Commandos and Baddies	30
Notes from the Warfare Office	32
Divers (Golfing) Dits	33
Letters to the Editor	34
Readers Response Page	36
Big Badge Challenge	37

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Foreword by



Rear Admiral M G Rutherford CBE Naval Secretary

DIVER RUTHERFORD ON SURFACE

This year I have had to let my SDO qualification lapse (Admirals do not get diving pay), so I am grateful for this opportunity to pay compliments to the professionals of the Royal Navy's Minewarfare and Diving sub-specialisation.

I have been an SDO continuously since my course at VERNON in 1965, all my recent dives being at Horsea Island under the critical eye of Petty Officer Gibson, and LS(D)s James, Eastham and Parton. None gave any deference to rank and I can report that every muddy minute had to be clocked up. I had to believe claims that the diver supervisors had been born after I had completed my initial training, but doubted others who stated that their mothers had been too!

In my years as a diver, I have endured some awful nil viz in Chatham and Liverpool docks, and sub zero waters in Arctic Norway, but have also enjoyed superb dives in the West Indies, Seychelles, Madeira, and the Gulf. Last October I dived to 42 metres inside a sunken car ferry in Lanaka, Cyprus (this was a Basar Dive, and did not count in the log!).

*Throughout, I have felt, and been, totally secure except on occasions as a younger diver, to which I can now admit, where the fun of diving led to slackness in strict adherence to the regulations. I can remember being very frightened indeed, and grateful for a safe return to the surface which resulted from luck rather than judgement. I can, therefore, from personal experience **COMMEND THE DIVING SAFETY RULES TO YOU. THEY HAVE A JUSTIFIABLE WORLD WIDE REPUTATION. OBEY THEM AND YOU WILL ENJOY YEARS OF HIGH STANDARD PROFESSIONAL DIVING.***

Five bells!

M. G. Rutherford

Superintendent of Diving

SUPERINTENDENT OF DIVING HAUL DOWN (or HAUL UP) MESSAGE

By Commander David Sandiford

My fellow Liverpudlian John Lennon once said "Life is what happens to you while you're making other plans". That must be how my nearly three years as SofD has gone so quickly.

The editorial in the last magazine talked of uncertainty and prophets of doom. The Ministry of Defence calls it "Options for change", but as a previous CINCFLEET put it: "The changes will amount to cuts and that is the only option". We have already taken some very severe cuts such as the loss of HMS CHALLENGER in 1989, the disbanding of the Port Diver branch in the RNR and the loss of the FOST CDE, due in April '93, with consequent cuts in our manpower. In the current climate we have otherwise survived quite well and at a recent Diver Branch policy meeting our man at DNMP gave the assurance that the Diver sub-branch was the only one actually increasing in numbers at the moment. We must continue to fight for each and every billet that is threatened.

I plead guilty to having said that we are dragging our diving equipment into the eighties but I think we have now achieved that aim. It is for our procurement process to pull us into this decade and prepare us for the next millennium. The major (for us) procurement programmes for replacement MCM/EOD diving sets and RCCs are moving along at a satisfactory pace now with one minor equipment requirement signed up and two others well on the way. The safety-to-life aspects, which we in this headquarters hold so dear, are a large factor in enabling progress to be maintained, and should ensure that we hold to the programmed In-Service dates of 1994/5 (RCCs/New set).

Emerging legislation is keeping the Inspectorate burning the midnight oil. First aid training was the last, drivers of dangerous goods is the next. As I said in my last article the branch is maintaining the highest standards of operational effectiveness but that will be tested by the financial cuts yet to be imposed. We must strive to keep our safe and enviable record in diving and EOD. I very firmly believe that all in this corner of Gunwharf are working extremely hard for the progress that military diving is undoubtedly making.

It has been a great privilege to hold the appointment of Superintendent of Diving and I thank you all for the support I have received. I am delighted to be handing over to another member of "The class of '72", and I offer some slightly modified words from Churchill's early life to comfort him and his staff when the flak starts flying, as it surely will at some stage in his tenure:

"Everyone threw the blame on us. I have noticed that they nearly always do. I suppose it is because they think we shall be able to bear it best".

RN DIVERS ELIGIBILITY FOR CIVILIAN DIVING QUALIFICATIONS

By Phil Burrell

The aim of this article is to help make Royal Navy divers aware of their eligibility for HSE Diver Training Certificates (DTC) and British Sub Aqua Club (BSAC) qualification. The information given has been gleaned from a variety of sources and is presented in summarised form. Further details, if required, can be obtained from The Diving Theory Section, MDT Dept of SMOPS.

Diver Training Certificates

A summary of the HSE Diver Training Certificates available was given in MAD Magazine Volume 2 Number 1 (1 June 1991).

MCDOs and AB(D)s receive an HSE Part 3 Certificate on completion of their training. In addition, as part of their career course, MCDOs and AB(D)s undergo diver first aid training and are awarded the HSE Diver First Aid Certificate. A current Diver First Aid certificate must be held by all MCD Officers and members of the Diver Sub Branch. Detailed regulations, course dates and application procedures are at DCI RN 189/92 and 268/92 and will appear in Change 5 to BR 2806.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) acknowledge that there are many experienced divers around who, for one reason or another, do not hold the DTC appropriate to their ability. To avoid these individuals from having to undergo a full and, in most cases expensive, training course for the certificate they require, the Experience Route Criteria Assessment (ERCA) scheme has been introduced. This procedure permits the experienced diver to have his knowledge and ability, relevant to the Certificate for which he is applying, tested at an HSE Approved ERCA Testing School. If the diver meets the assessment criteria he will be eligible for the award of the appropriate certificate.

Royal Navy diving training does not fulfil the requirements of the HSE Part 1 DTC. The HSE, however, accept that the career diver is a highly competent and experienced individual. They have therefore, as an extenuating case, permitted RN Career Divers to make up the areas in which they lack experience with a commercial diving school at the same time as they undertake the ERCA. This represents a considerable financial saving against having to undertake a full Part 1 training course.

Details of the eligibility of Royal Navy divers for all certificates are summarised below:

The Ship's Diver Part IV Certificate

To qualify for an HSE Part IV Certificate a diver must have completed the Ship's Diver Course and logged the following additional times during RN dives:

10-19 metres	300 minutes
20 metres plus	200 minutes

One dive of duration of more than 20 minutes should have been deeper than 28 metres. The diver should also have used free mouthpieces and have experience of testing air quality and small boat handling. If the Ship's Diver feels he meets these criteria he should submit his log to the CPO(D) QC, Diving Theory Section, MDT Dept of SMOPS for verification. The log will be annotated to reflect the Ship's Diver's eligibility for a Part IV ERCA and the diver can apply to a commercial school for assessment.

The Able Seaman (Diver) Part I Certificate

To qualify for a Part I Certificate The Able Seaman (Diver) must log the following in-water times on completion of training:

30-39 metres	100 minutes
40-50 metres	150 minutes

At least 60% of these dives should be using surface supplied diving equipment. The diver must have dived from a wet-bell, used hot water suits, been instructed in the hazards of diving from Dynamically Positioned (DP) vessels and have experience of water jets, air lifting underwater construction tasks and air sampling.

If the diver lacks the wet bell, hot water suit and DP lecture experience he can make up these areas, but only these areas, when he completes his ERCA. As with the Ship's Diver, the Able Seaman diver's log should be forwarded to SMOPS for verification before he applies to a commercial school for a Part I ERCA.

The LS(D), PO(D), CPO(D), WO(D), and MCDO

Leading Seaman divers and above can qualify for a Part I as for the AB(D) although they do not need to log the extra in-water times subsequent to their training course.

British Sub-Aqua Club Additional Training Requirements

RN Divers who wish to obtain BSAC qualifications based on their RN experience should first join a BSAC club. They will then be required to undertake additional training, appropriate to the qualification they desire, in order to meet the BSAC assessment criteria. These Additional Training Requirements (ATRs) will be presented in the form of modules, whose contents will vary according to the diving qualification already held. On application for an ATR assessment, it is understood that the appropriate ATR module is ordered by the BSAC Club instructors, with the cost being met by the applicant as part of his training fees. The ATR module contains details of the training to be given to the student by the club to bring him to the appropriate level. It is further understood that details of the ATR modules will only be supplied to clubs and not to individuals. Full details of the scheme are available from the BSAC HQ. A table of the requirements for RN divers is detailed below. It should be noted that, unfortunately the BSAC did not consult the RN Diving School before they produced this table. MDT Dept of SMOPS is attempting to redress this situation and establish a closer liaison over training matters with the BSAC.

RN Diver's Additional Training Requirements.

Ship's Diver
Ship's Diver Supervisor
Ship's Diver Officer
Able Seaman (Diver)
All to complete Module 6 to become
BSAC Sports Diver

LS(D)
PO(D)
WO(D)
MCDO
All to complete Module 7 to become
BSAC Advanced Diver



Fleet Exercises Minelaying System

“YOU CAN'T FIT QUICKER THAN A FIT FEMS FITTER”

By Steve Osmond

Dedicated to the breed of men who enjoy travelling the length of our fair country to work in the rain, developing a back problem, calluses on the knee caps and smelling of duck oil - MSI - Defence Systems Limited - FEMS Fitters

Following 4 successful deployments of the Fleet Exercise Minelaying System (FEMS) under the accomplished supervision of COMMW's SMINO, the larger than life Barney Barnett (two T's like in spaghetti) the system is proving itself a success. FEMS is a Portable Minelaying System fitted as required to the Tornado Class of RMAS Torpedo Recovery Vessels. But, I hear you ask, who gets it onto the ship in the first place and who takes it away when Barney's finished playing with it?

The FEMS Fitters are highly qualified, highly motivated and highly paid - sorry, just joking, the first two maybe, the last one!!!! A team consists of 3 engineers, 2 "Clankees" and 1 "Greeny" and are drawn from a hand-picked team of 6 (certifiable) volunteers. The engineers



hydraulic winches plus fitting of control gear, emergency stops etc.

The steelwork and winches are held to the ship's deck by over 500 nuts and bolts with over 700 washers, all of which have to be torqued down to three white knuckles.

dislocate at 70Nm pressure, require no sleep what so ever, coupled with a need to exist on a staple diet of cold coffee and LG280 soaked Jock pies.

With the installation of FEMS having to be achieved within 24 hours, dealing with



are normally employed by MSI-DSL to look after the Post Design Service side of life on several contracts associated with MCMD, these include Sonar 193M, In-service Mines, RN Diving and EOD equipment. All of these services are provided for the MoD via DGUW(N) at Portland.

The installation of FEMS involves the assembly of over 5.5 tonnes of steelwork, commissioning 2 x 3 tonne electro

The fitters are required to show dedicated enthusiasm for completing the installation in the allocated time regardless of weather conditions - usually bucketsfull of Scottish sunshine and 70 knot sea breezes. The task must be carried out whilst explaining the equipment to inquisitive onlookers, including invariably, a new PO(MW), at the same time making mental notes of how *they* would have designed it. This diversion runs parallel to the task of trying to coordinate the movements and actions of the TRV's crew, the Slingers, COMMW, DGUW(N), DGST(N), various hauliers, other Ship's crew, MSB staff and anyone else who is present.

Now then, if Charles Darwin's theory of man's evolution is correct, future descendants of FEMS Fitters will walk with a stoop, have double jointed fingers, naturally formed kneepads, wrists that



the above can cause a lot of stress which we have found can only be relieved with copious amounts of 80 Shilling ale.

So, if you have the dubious pleasure of operating this equipment off the Scottish coast in the middle of winter, when it's blowing a "hooli" just remember who put it there - MSI - Defence Systems Limited.



What's the Caption?

The response to the "WHAT'S THE CAPTION" question was both encouraging and numerous. Three of the best replies are printed below. Unfortunately some of the verbal quotes are unprintable.

"I'll be glad once these initial trident missile trials are over"

"Are you sure they're including underwater trampolining in the next Olympics?" (Lt Cdr Rob Hoole)

The best reply was received from CPO(SEA) Snowball of the Seamanship planning office HMS Raleigh:

Dear Sir,

You must surely be aware that this is a new development recently trialled at PASLEY's POOL, in diver propulsion systems. It is in fact the Mk1 version of S.C.U.M.S. or, Self Contained Underwater Manoeuvring System.

This follows the principal used by Squid, Octopi and cuttlefish, etc., where a high pressure jet propulsion system exists.

In S.C.U.M.S. the propulsion comes from a self contained, rechargeable compressed air bottle, power/thrust being controlled from a handwheel on the bottle, worn on the waist belt.

Gasses pass into the suit, are absorbed into the body by a form of symbiotic osmosis (still on the secret list and under further development). These gasses are then vented downwards and backwards though the nostrils, with directional control being achieved by manual adjustment of the nasal cavities.

With practise very high speeds can be achieved, however excessive thrust should be used with caution especially when returning to the surface, as the illustrated photograph clearly demonstrates.

Please send my prize to the above address. Of the two prize computers available I would prefer the 486 machine with the colour monitor. Failing that the holiday for two in Bermuda.

Yours Aye,
'Snowy' Snowball



A WILLING FOE AND SEA ROOM

Who said that in these days of "Hi-Tech" ships that the skills of the old sailor have vanished?

NAME THE MAN—NAME THE SHIP (or Class)
CLUES:

a. **The Man.** The wizened tar, centre frame—back to camera—thinning hair, is often seen puffing on a black cheroot (Yeah-Yeah-Yeah) Mentioned in diving folklore as possibly the last Sailing Master of the old HMS RECLAIM!

b. **The Ship.** Seen here under sail and homeward bound from Napoleon's last resting place.

Answers on page 11.



MAD DRAFTING



*Lt Cdr
M Linfield*

Having completed my first 18 months as the MW and Divers (also PT and Sonar!) Drafting Officer I feel I am now in a position to share with you my observations on the present drafting scene and the way ahead. The excellent and professionally produced MAD magazine is the ideal vehicle for my transmission.

Drafting

All RN, QARNNS and WRNS drafting is conducted from HMS CENTURION by Naval Drafting, which, although based in Gosport, is a Division of 2SL's Department. It is led by the Captain Naval Drafting (Drafty) and 6 sections each headed by a Commander, who is also the WO's appointer. Drafty's primary function is to provide the Fleet with correctly qualified men in the right numbers and in the right places, keeping turbulence to a minimum. Once the Fleet requirement is met, then the shore billets have to be filled. This sounds simple, but, sadly, it is not as easy as it sounds.

Drafty's other major task is the Advancement or Promotion of all ratings, as well as controlling their Engagements. It is at CENTURION that all rosters are maintained for advancement and the Promotion Boards sit for selections to WO and CPO. Those who volunteer for 20E are selected at separate boards. NDD deals with all matters concerning extensions of service, early release and administers those ratings on Extended Service (reducing requirement).

The other tasks within Drafty's province are the responsibility for the Air Movement of all Naval Personnel and their families plus the recording of all Next of Kin information in the RNCCC (RN Casualty Co-Ordination Centre).

Finally, Drafty is not solely a peacetime organisation. War Drafting, not only of regular forces, but also Naval Pensioners and Members of the Royal Fleet Reserve is carried out under the direction of the War Drafting Control Officer.

First Impressions

I am pleased to report that I have come to terms with the vagaries of the MAD World

and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of my job (which is just as well, as I will be here for the next 7 years or more). The satisfaction stems from dealing with people like yourselves and hopefully making a helpful and constructive input into your present and future employment. I am therefore, fully aware and most conscious of how important drafting is to you and the impact it has on your lives. To this end, and within the limits of the Drafting Rules and what is both possible and desirable, we on your Drafting Desk will endeavour to be both helpful, fair and balanced in providing the most professional of services to you. Please bear in mind that not everyone gets 1PRE all the time, nor exactly what they asked for. We will however, study your preferences, personal circumstances and career aspirations to strike the right balance between your own particular needs and those of the service.

MAD Drafting Team

D1 Cdr A D EWING, The Boss, WO Appointer. Ext 2494
 D1A Lt Cdr M LINFIELD, Drafting Officer. Ext 2453
 AD1A PO Wrn Wtr Pam MILES, SRs Drafting. Ext 2441
 AD1A1 LWRENWTR (G) Sally Long, JRs Drafting. Ext 2441

Liaison Visits and Lectures

Drafty conducts regular Roadshows to spread the 'Gospel according to CND' at all major establishments and I or members of my team lecture to all Qualifying Courses. But this barely breaks the ice. I am very keen to establish and maintain a good working relationship throughout the branches. The more dialogue and liaison there is with you - the customer - the greater the understanding and appreciation of what Drafty can and cannot do. One proven way of providing a better service is by the increased use of liaison visits, both to and from CENTURION.

I welcome and encourage visits to the drafting desk by ships and establishments Officers and Senior Rates. These visits provide the opportunity, with the aid of the computer, to view and discuss each member of the department. In this way, ERDs can be extended or reduced depending on ships programmes etc. This avoids crisis management and enables Managers to produce sensible long term plans. These visits (uniform please) should normally take no longer than one and a half hours (time well spent) and can be arranged through the desk.

I am also more than willing to visit ships and establishments (budget permitting). These visits can be most useful and enjoyable. They afford me the opportunity to see as many MAD ratings as possible with the minimum of disruption. Two way dialogue is normal on these visits - I am

able to give an update on the drafting scene and answer queries and listen to the occasional good old moan.

Drafting Preference Form - C230

Following on from the value of good liaison visits, is the importance of the other information from which we work. This brings me logically onto the C230. The C230 contains the only information available to the desk on preferences and personal circumstances. Therefore it cannot be emphasised too strongly that should any personal details change, a new C230 should be forwarded. It is important that the rating and his Divisional Officer ensure that all relevant facts are recorded and YES/NO boxes ticked. To aid in the accurate completion of C230s a booklet is now available from the drafting desk on request. Also, to assist ratings in their decision on Preference Areas I have compiled the following 3 charts to indicate disposition of jobs. NOTE: Supplement to BR 14 is no longer valid.

MW ratings are encouraged not to be too downhearted by the lack of LFS jobs and are advised to volunteer for LFS General Billets if interested. A few exist.

Drafting Request Form C240

Following on from the C230 is the C240. I strongly recommend the use of this form. It is the method of volunteering for a specific course, draft or extension/reduction of a current draft. I will give a meaningful and constructive answer whenever possible. Extensions to LFS is always NO unless the education of children approaching GCSE examination is effected. Requests received for extensions after a relief has been nominated cannot be entertained because of the knock-on effect and turbulence to others. The message is, for those whose present drafts suit them whether sea/shore or LFS - THINK AHEAD - extensions after a relief is nominated is very rare.

Advancement Rosters

The MW Branch Requirement now broadly matches Bearing. This is a dramatic reversal from the shortages experienced up until as recently as last year. This has been brought about by a number of factors: Options for Change, LTC manpower savings measures and the marked reduction in the PVR rate caused by the recession. As a result of manpower requirements being cut, the gaps and underbearings, which resulted in short roster waiting times, have now come to an abrupt end. The consequence is longer roster lengths for the foreseeable future, this forecast should not detract from the fact that advancement and promotion remains the incentive. The message is to get qualified for the next higher rate asap. The current state of the rosters is:

ROSTER	STATE/TOP POINTS	BASIC DATE	B13 ISSUED AUG 92
PO(D)	156	08.12.89	NIL
LS(D)	378	25.03.88	NIL
PO(MW)	INT	10.03.92	2
LS(MW)	INT	15.03.91	2

NOTE: Qualifying courses will only run if sufficient B13s are forecast. Hence, recent cancellation of LS(MW) QC61 and 63. Divers are already in the overtrained strength ie. too many divers trained for too few B13s. The next LS(D)QC is forecast for autumn 93 and PO(D)QC somewhat later.

Sea Drafts

The rules state that we must give at least 5 months notice for a sea draft. We actually achieve 7 months for JRs and up to 12 months for SRs. The maximum permissible length of sea service is 30 months + 3 months. Actual length of sea service applied:

- a. All Divers 24 months

- b. S(MW) FSD 24 months. All other MW ratings 30 months

Shore Drafts

In this case, the rules state 3 months notice for draft. We try to give longer than this but are limited by the timely receipt of the Red Crossed C230 which gives the Availability Date (AVDATE) for Shore Service. MW ratings, mainly, spend the whole of their time between sea drafts in one establishment, unless a volunteer to move. Divers are moved after approximately 3 years.

Loan Drafts

No such thing. A rating is either DRAFTED or LOANED TEMPORARY DUTY (LTD) in which case a Draft Order is not issued.

Summary

I hope I have written an article of interest and value. If any queries result or any other topic needs discussion please contact the desk or write to me direct. I and my team are here to provide a helpful and efficient service. Please help us to help you.

LFS—10 SEPTEMBER 1992

LFS	CPO(D)	PO(D)	LS(D)	AB(D)	CPO(MW)	PO(MW)	LS(MW)	AB(MW)
Gibraltar	1	-	2	2	-	-	-	-
Hong Kong	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
USA	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

SHORE AREAS—10 SEPTEMBER 1992

Sea Preference Area	CPO(D)	PO(D)	LS(D)	AB(D)	CPO(MW)	PO(MW)	LS(MW)	AB(MW)	Remarks
Portsmouth	13	16	30	39	17	6	9	37	Ribble PXO
Plymouth	3	4	5	10	1	4	3	2	
Portland	2	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	Post end date 01.04.93
London	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	
S. England (Other than above)	3	4	1	2	1	3	-	6	
N. England	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	
Rosyth	1	2	5	8	4	4	10	12	
Faslane	1	3	7	10	-	-	2	-	
Scotland (Other than above)	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2	
Wales	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
N. Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
UK/Dispersed	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

SHORE AREAS—10 SEPTEMBER 1992

Sea Preference Area	CPO(D)	PO(D)	LS(D)	AB(D)	CPO(MW)	PO(MW)	LS(MW)	AB(MW)	Remarks
Portsmouth									
MCM2	-	5	5	15	1	10	10	35	+ Bicester 8/93
Polar Circle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	
Devonport	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	
Rosyth									
MCM1	-	8	8	24	1	16	16	56	- Bicester 8/93
MCM3	-	6	6	18	1	10	10	20	
MCM10	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
CFP	-	-	-	-	1	-	7	5	
COMMW	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	
Wales	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	
N. Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

MCM 2 Deployment '92

TASK GROUP 616.1 MCM 'ON CALL FORCE' DEPLOYMENT 11 MAY - 24 JULY 1992

By D. Smith SCPO(MW) to MCM 2

Task Group 616.1 comprising of ATHERSTONE, COTTESMORE and CATTISTOCK sailed from Portsmouth on 11 May and headed for the French coast and Exercise NORMINEX 92. The Squadron Staff flew direct to the French Naval Base later the same day by Fleet Air Arm Jetstream and on landing were picked up by the French equivalent of 'pushers transport' and taken for an "unplanned" tour of L'Orient. WO Bob CLIFFORD, having established that we were going the wrong way, tried to explain to the driver that he wanted to go to the Senior Rates Mess adjacent to the Naval Base and then the Junior Rates accommodation to drop off the Leading Writer. Bob's French was limited to emergency phrases like "My friend has the money and will pay" and "I honestly thought that was my glass." However, we eventually arrived safely at the mess.

Following an overnight stop in the mess, the Staff embarked in HMS CARRON, who we were to use as an MCMTA and Command Ship. (The first time that this has been attempted properly). The Technical Office and Flat became the Ops Room, and the Gyro Room the Squadron Chief's office and DREAMT Computer. The Engineering Dept felt quite at home under the ladder into the Tech Office flat, and were only interrupted by the "rounds routine" to the compartment below. The classroom/bunk space adjoining the Tech Office Flat had been enhanced by a further two bunks and became an all rates mess; although very cramped, it was comfortable.

Staff numbers were boosted when the TA watchkeepers arrived and prior to the exercise start they divided themselves into a two watch system with Cdr 'Gerry' WOOD(RNR) taking PO(MW) 'Jim' HAWKINS and Lt Cdr 'Kit' ORD (RNR) in charge of the World Snoring Champion PO(MW) 'Sid' LOVEFACE. We briefed the 3 HUNTS and the French Tripartite CASSIOPEE (attached to the group) on the evening of the 12th and the 7 MSF's the following day at anchor in Quiberon Bay. After a hectic start everything settled and the units started producing good results. The communicators onboard were however fast approaching the "zombie" stage but they never faltered and managed to cope with the huge amount of extra traffic that they had to deal with as the Command Platform.

NORMINEX proved to be a well organized exercise. The minelay plan for our particular area of operations was realistic and gave us a good balance of varied mine types to counter. The task group performed particularly well, achieving an overall clearance of 93% with all but one of the 23 mines located and recovered prior to the recovery phase. Excellent weather and favourable sonar conditions certainly helped but our operators had to work extremely hard to achieve results on a par with that of the Tripartite with its DUBM 21B. Once again it was down to the quality and training of the RN operators who were excellent. Overall it was a very successful and enjoyable exercise, and which it is certainly worth the RN participating in the future.

Following all the hard work of the past weeks, the ships berthed in L'Orient for essential maintenance and personal battery recharging. ATHERSTONE were challenged to Rugby for the Squadron Cock by CATTISTOCK and



● *NORMINEX—off to L'Orient*

after a hard fought match the CATTISTOCK came out the losers. In the 'third half' (and as the sun set over L'Orient) the ATHERSTONE's team put on a display of funnel climbing to the strains of "We're climbing up Sunshine Mountain", much to the amusement of the duty watch of a French warship. Not exactly 'Beat the Retreat' but entertaining to say the least.

Whilst alongside in L'Orient, we, the 'Staff', transferred all our equipment and personal belongings to the ships that were to be "home" for the next eight weeks. The majority of the staff were accommodated in HMS COTTESMORE. The engineering team split themselves between the remaining two HUNTS, with Medical cover moving to ATHERSTONE and the Gunnery dept into CATTISTOCK.

The Group sailed from L'Orient on the 26 May having completed a mini maintenance period courtesy of FSU 01 and the next leg of the deployment took us across the Bay of Biscay. As is the norm, it was a particularly rough passage and in the Bay we suffered our first bit of bad luck; CATTISTOCK suffered a main engine failure which was to require an engine change. On Saturday 30 May we entered Gibraltar. Having switched to tropicals and 'Ray Bans'. Many people were going through the, 'Why don't these shorts fit me anymore, they fitted perfectly three years ago!' syndrome. The Leading Writer's Linford Christie impression, proved that pussers cotton shorts can and will stretch. Whilst in Gibraltar, the Squadron took part in several sporting events, including a cricket match against a local side and a football match against HM S/M TRIUMPH which were both won by the Squadron. Highlight of the visit for many was the 0900 start to the Rock Race on the Monday morning. The Rock was shrouded in mist and rain as the runners set off (some I suspected for the cable car!) An early casualty was Lt Cdr Glen FORREST who had been one of the favourites, he pulled up at the Casino with a hamstring injury and took no further part. The race was won jointly by CPO Richard LINES and CPO Dave SWANN both of COTTESMORE, indeed COTTESMORE took most of the top 10 places. Away from the sport CATTISTOCK with the help of CSU from Portsmouth were very busy exchanging the port main engine.

On Tuesday 2 June the Force left the jetty at Coaling Island and made its way into the Mediterranean, our hopes of bright sunshine and calm seas were dashed as we bounced our way towards Augusta in Sicily. However, the strong winds gave Commander MCM2 and AB(D) Jason DAWSON an ideal opportunity to windsurf part of the way down the Med! Having honed our MCM skills during NORMINEX, we now concentrated (weather permitting) on the seamanship and gunnery aspects of training, particularly as we were losing our Gunnery Staff at Augusta. Light line transfers were conducted daily with ATHERSTONE's Golf Ball method of passing the gunline eventually working thanks to the Coxswain who received all the tops and guidance required from his CO, Lt Cdr 'Nick' FUNNELL (who had incidentally failed miserably the previous day). Our first stop in



● *NORMINEX—Some of the 22 mines recovered*

MCM 2 Deployment '92



● HMS CATTISTOCK—In the sun

Augusta was a very brief six hours. Time enough for fuel and provisions and some "Italian Passex planning" ashore for MCM2, the CO's and BNA Rome! We sailed in the late afternoon for the two day transit to Greece and on the first day out, the SOO and WO Bob Clifford both attempted to water-ski behind COTTESMORE. A feat that they were to perfect over the coming weeks.

The morning of the 10 June saw the Force at the entrance to the spectacular Corinth Canal. BNA Athens and members of the Embassy staff joined for the transit and enjoyed a Flag Deck Lunch, during which details of the next part of the deployment were finalised. After the transit, we made our way through the first of the Greek Islands, with their superb mountain ranges, before rafting up in the very attractive, Bay of Poros. During the afternoon sun the ships were cleaned and made ready for the entry into Navplion. (We had been at sea for 8 days by now). This was followed by a dog watch watersports period including sailing, canoeing. During a general 'Hands to Bathe', the Coxswain of ATHERSTONE who shall remain nameless but his initials are 'AJ', entered the water complete with sunglasses (no prizes for guessing the branch to which he belongs!). To make the most of a beautiful evening all the ships then had a Sweep Deck barbecue, ATHERSTONE having one of their popular Games Nights, in which the Senior Rates took all the honours, although at the time of writing some months later I may have got the result slightly wrong!

Early the following morning we were to enter Navplion, the first official capital of Greece. The old town is set at the base of a hill and is overlooked by a most spectacular 17 century Fort. While alongside the boys worked hard at both ship maintenance and cleanliness in what was a very "high profile" berth on the main road, opposite many Tavernas! A few 'runners' (nutters) took the opportunity to run up to the hilltop fort via stone steps that started at the base of the hill. This was a climb that levelled out to become very steep in its best part and proved very hard work. In true Naval tradition the best time to run was at midday, when the shade was minimal and there were no locals around. It was very difficult to get some out of their daily routine; "I've run every lunchtime for the last four years so I'm not stopping now."



● CPO Tony Mulrain—
Apparently things are good!

The best beach was at 'Tolos' and within easy reach by taxi. After an afternoon on the beach, the Leading Writer and I got into one of these local taxis only to find that it was being driven by Alain Prost (obviously moonlighting). The afternoons tanning was all wasted, as two now white figures, emerged from the taxi and stumbled off, thankful to be alive! The Squadron Doc was kept busy during the time alongside tending to prospective applicants of the Royal Navy Moped Display Team locally known as "The Red Elbows".

Following a most enjoyable visit to Navplion the Group sailed for Souda Bay in Crete with Captain L C HOPKINS Royal Navy (Chief Staff Officer to COMMW) embarked. On passage we conducted minesweeping, seamanship, general drills and a 'Greek God Steampast' (Had to keep the Divers happy). The highlight of this part of the deployment was perhaps the transit through 'Santorini', the largest volcano crater in the World. High up on the steep slopes of what remains of the crater lies the village of Santorini a small settlement relying on the tourist trade for its wealth. The views during the transit were spectacular and photographs could not recreate the sheer size and beauty of the place.

On the 19 June we berthed at the Souda Bay Nato Fuelling Jetty and then moved to the Commercial Port for a Self Maintenance Period and visit. During this period most of the outstanding Operational Defects were rectified in preparation for a joint Italian/UK Passex planned for early July. The Ships Companies made the most of the sunshine and took in the majority of the tourist sites! The famous Samaria Gorge was visited by members of COTTESMORE who all thoroughly enjoyed the demanding four hour trek from the summit all the way down between the steep sided mountains to the sea. The Gorge itself can only be walked in the Summer months as at this time the river dries up allowing you to walk along the river bed for some of the way. After completing the walk, you arrive at the local feeding station on the beach and await a boat that takes you along the coast to the coach pick up point. The Samaria Gorge is a must for any tourist to Crete and although an arduous and tiring day, is well worth the pain and blisters later.

Wives and girlfriends also took the opportunity to get some sunshine and flew out to the island. Station leave was taken by those that could be spared allowing a mid deployment break for both parties and the Squadron staff left the ships and checked into a accommodation ashore for the period. One particular night I was awoken by a strange noise coming from the corner of my room, I looked over and saw a plastic bag move across the



● HMS ATHESTONE—Beware of Greeks bearing gifts

tiles. Just as I got to the bag, a small mouse leapt out and disappeared into the darkness. Not to be outdone I opened the door so that he could escape and moved everything off the floor in order to see my guest wherever he was in the room placing my running shoes on top of the waste bin so that he could not use them as a hiding place. A foolproof plan, I thought. I could not flush him out. I was everywhere, leaping on the bed trying to frighten it into coming out of hiding. A brief glimpse and this mad matelot leaps across the room with killer flip-flop. The mouse loved it, watching me suffer. I thought that I would never get to sleep again. After a few brief snippets, I never heard him again that night and gave up in the end and went back to sleep. In the morning having not had a good nights sleep I walked rather sleepily into the bathroom and there to my horror in the base unit of the shower was the little b*****s calling card left for me to sort out! Having cleaned up that little problem I left for work. Remembering the running shoes left on the waste bin? Well the maid was wearing them, thinking that I had thrown them out (they were on the bin I suppose). I had to explain to the manager all about the mouse and the bin before they were returned.

After ten days alongside the task group sailed on the 29 June to R/V with the Italians for the Passex. On passage they exercised seamanship and general drills prior to the entry into Messina for the briefing. Two Italian minehunters rendezvoused with the task force to the south of the Straits of Messina for Leadthrough Ops. They were the first of class ITS LERICI

MCM 2 Deployment '92

and her sister ship ITS SAPRI. At the briefing in LERICI, it was obvious that the Italians were happy for us to make the running and plan the first stage of the Passex, the transit to Sardinia for MCM Ops. After an overnight stop in Messina the Passex group sailed, and for the next two days exercised OOW Manoeuvres, tows, RAS Approaches, Light Line Transfers, Navcomex, Crosspol and the now standard 'Hands to Bathe.' The Italians do not seem to take the same interest as the Brits do to leaping off the ships side, diving off the bridge wings, and somersaulting into the blue crinkly stuff. To finally finish them off, during one particular Hands to Bathe, Lt Cdr Glen FORREST water-skied behind CATTISTOCK and completed a circuit of the whole group. We were to discover that the Italians do not normally carry out evolutions at close quarters or in company but they adapted very quickly and proved to be most professional. The two days of operations were extremely good value and experience for both sides. The next phase of the Passex was to consist of a Short Term Minehunting Operation off Sardinia. The task group sub divided into two groups, with the Italians taking charge of one, and us the other. Seven mines were within our anchorage left from a previous exercise so we didn't hold out much hope of finding them. The shallow bay of the Gulf di Palmas proved to be a most difficult area to work with hull mounted sonars. The afternoon effect ensured that the sonar picture degraded from about 1000z onwards. Bottom conditions comprised of two metres of thick sea grass which certainly did not help for good detection of contacts. SAPRI with FIAR SQQ 14 (IT) VDS fitted had more success and recovered one exercise mine during the operation. However, despite the difficult conditions, the period proved to be an excellent training opportunity in calm waters, during which all the minehunting systems were tested. Following this we took a twenty four hour standoff in Cagliari. This proved to be fairly uneventful, because it was the Sabbath and the night life was very close to extinct.

With a very quiet run ashore behind us we sailed for Ajaccio in Corsica, the final stop before returning to Gibraltar. On the morning of the 7 July the ships entered harbour at Ajaccio. After spending a forenoon fuelling we moved across the harbour and berthed in the town centre adjacent to the Sultan of Oman's Royal Yacht. For obvious reasons this berth was very high profile and visiting the ships proved popular with locals and tourists alike. The time alongside was spent enjoying the local restaurants and beaches which were both superb. On the sporting front the Squadron participated in a five a side football tournament against the French Naval contingent. In a hard fought competition one of the Squadron teams won through and took the trophy much to our delight and to the surprise of the home team. All this sunshine was obviously having its effect on AATHERSTONE's Diving Team who on arrival at the beach one afternoon (complete with low profile, security conscious "I'm a Royal Navy Diver" T-Shirts) decided to distribute beer to the sunbathers below by dropping the cool box from the top of the long flight of stairs to the beach. A cascade of ice and tins rained down (apparently the handle broke!) Egos dented they settled down quietly for an afternoon of sun (or self!) worship.

We sailed from Ajaccio on the 13 July for the penultimate leg of the deployment, the passage back to Gibraltar. During the three day passage the ships exercised general drills, with WEMIT's being conducted by CATTISTOCK and AATHERSTONE. All took part in the "Farewell Steampast" where each ship gave a fifteen minute interpretation of how they viewed the deployment! Special mention must go to CATTISTOCK who gave an excellent performance worthy of RADA acclaim.

The group entered thick fog on the morning of the 16 July but was still making very slow headway towards Gibraltar and an early morning arrival. The OOW having to rudely awake WO Bob Clifford with sound signals. Bob had rigged his hammock between the mast and funnel. The fog lifted and the task group (now looking like the locals) slid alongside Coaling Island for a three day informal visit. The Squadron Staff except

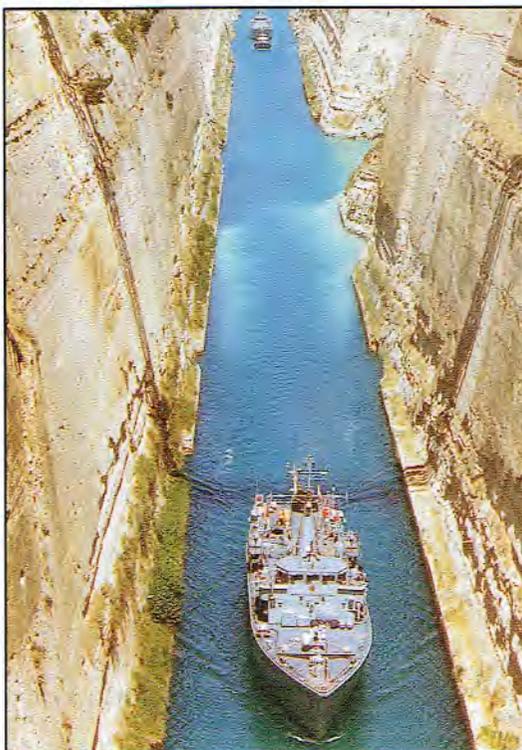


● Nauplion Harbour

for the SOO and myself flew home. We remained behind to take part in the inaugural Second MCM Biathlon which was to take place first thing on the Saturday morning. The Biathlon involved a four hundred metre swim at the Nuffield Pool followed by a run up the Rock. On the morning of the event all the competitors were transported to the start courtesy of the clubswingers. At the last minute they decided to change the course (to make it safer!). We were then taken on the new route that we were to take from the pool back to the Casino. The new route now took in what the locals affectionately call "suicide hill" this had replaced the slightly easier option of running the lower road back to the cable car. My name was mud as competitors cursed the fact that I had thought of the idea of a Biathlon in the first place! On the stroke of nine o'clock the first volunteer was away and then every two minutes after that we took to the water. Early setbacks happened to both CPO 'Richard' LINES (joint Rock Race winner) and PO 'Des' FULLER who both suffered from broken goggle straps just at the crucial moment of waiting for the off. At least something was going right for me! CPO LINES swam blind for the whole of the eight lengths and then attempted to make up for lost time on the steep ascent. In the end Lt Cdr Glen FORREST came first. However, it was decided by all the competitors that on this occasion taking part really was the main thing and all went away with a trophy.

The ships completed their time in Gibraltar and then sailed for home on the 19 July. SOO and myself flew home, and with all the staff away the ships enjoyed a quiet passage back to the UK.

COMMW Commodore C J FREEMAN Royal Navy accompanied by MCM2 joined the ships at Spithead for the entry back into Portsmouth on the 24 July 1992.



● Corinth Canal transit



● HMS CATTISTOCK Engine Change

The Deployment itself lasted ten weeks during which time the ships visited six different countries (some twice), took part in a major Nato Exercise, worked with the Italian Navy on MCM Ops, and managed to have some "Fun in the Sun". Hopefully this article will rekindle memories for the members of the task group who cruised the Med in the Summer of '92.

SPREADING THE WORD— MCDO RECRUITMENT

By Lieutenant Commander Alan Trevarthen

As the present custodian of the LMCDO course, I am somewhat embarrassed to inform the reader that during my tenure of office, the number of candidates volunteering for MCD specialist training has fallen dramatically. I hasten to add this does not reflect a personal or social problem of mine (I hope)! There is unfortunately, a widely held view within the Fleet which believes that the MCD Officer, and particularly the "GL" MCD officer, has some how become an endangered species; perhaps soon to become extinct—a casualty of savings measures and penny pinching. It is a view, for example, which has been expressed by each successive OOW course that passed through MDT SMOPS during the last 6 months of 1992.

I am glad to report that such scurrilous rumours are indeed humbug. The MCD officer sub specialisation is most definitely alive and well; so to the MWO sub specialisation. Both options are open to Seaman officers, of ALL LISTS, who feel able to meet the challenges of the training and wish to taste the rich fruits of a minewarfare career!

The confusion, surrounding the future of MCD training, has in the main arisen from the LTC91 savings measure, to "Rationalise MCD Training". This DGNMT sponsored savings measure looked at a number of ways in which MCD and MWO training might be restructured to reduce costs. It was widely believed that the number of MCDs trained would reduce dramatically and the numbers of MWOs trained (who have a shorter course and are not eligible for SSP(D)) would increase. However, the outcome of the study to implement the savings measure, resulted in relatively little change. Refreshingly the view expressed by most, particularly in the light of recent operational experience, is one which sees the MCD and particularly the MCD (PWO), as highly regarded and a most flexible asset, second to none within NATO. The initial training cost may well be high but the MCD (PWO) is accepted as a good, long term, investment.

Thus the future of the MCD officer is most definitely assured. Indeed, as ever, there is no shortage of interest amongst young officers, but at present too many are turned away by ill informed advice and most do not ever pursue their initial interest as far as the MCD aptitude test. Setting aside the rumour which has risen from the MCD Rationalisation study, young officers are too frequently advised (by JOTOs, PWOs, XO's and CO's alike) that sub specialising MCD is a "career limiting move!" What rot! A casual glance at the last few promotion signals for selection to Commander will clearly counter that view. Furthermore today's MCMVs are highly sophisticated warships. Operating in the vanguard of the maritime conflict, they are manned by young officers who have exacting warfare responsibilities. The Operations Room of Hunt or Sandown class MCMV provides excellent warfare experience for a junior officer, whilst experience as an MCMV XO provides a good grounding in the management skills that will be required to lead the Operations department of larger warship. The continued success of the MCD/MWO specialist with PWO training is clear evidence of this fact.

If the increasing demands of the minewarfare challenge are to be met then it is important that the MCD course continues to attract the high calibre of officer that it has in the past. It seems only fair, for all concerned, that those charged with responsibility of advising young officers about the MCD specialisation, do so with an informed and open mind; relaying the facts accurately and allowing the officer to make a balanced and considered assessment for himself.

I fully appreciate that this article will, in the main, be read by an informed, supportive audience who already extol the virtues of Minewarfare to the uninformed. I would ask only that the particular argument for an officer sub specialising MCD and indeed MWO is one which is aired regularly. It is after all beholden upon us all to attract the very best young officers into our fold.



Who is He and who is She?

Lt Cdr Pincher MARTIN RN seen here setting HMS BRECON's mainsail on return from Operation CORPORATE by way of the island of Saint Helena.

A dit by way of explanation. In the early days of the Hunt class the Corps of Naval Constructors came up with a novel "Lo-Tech" solution to resolve the ships' inability to adequately "hover"—a sail! This method quickly found its way to the Bosun's "pending locker". Days went by and the good ships BRECON and LEDBURY were called to war . . . much of the rest is history. When the clearance was done the ships set sail!! for home. The boys had been without and were looking forward to their speedy return home. But alas, with only one of her three engines working, progress was slow. The "come-in-hand" store was raided and the mainsail set, it added about a quarter of a knot and speeded the ships return to blighty.

Uggy D the D.



Dixie's Page

THE BRONINGTON TRUST

by WO(MW) Dixie Dean

Some of you may be aware that the old HMS BRONINGTON has been purchased by a trust with a view to preserving her for viewing by the general public. Named the BRONINGTON Trust, it is one of many ventures being undertaken by the Trafford Park Development Corporation who recruit sponsorship from local industry. The patron of the trust is His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales who was the Commanding Officer of the ship in the mid seventies. Mr John Gregory of the corporation has been heavily involved in persuading various organisations to donate equipment, supply materials or provide other support to help restore the ship.

On the 28th October Lieutenant Commander Thompson (SOMW) and myself were privileged to attend the opening ceremony conducted by His Royal Highness The Prince Of Wales.

The ship is moored on the Manchester Ship Canal at Quay West (just down the road from Manchester United Football Stadium) as part of the development of the Trafford Park area of the city. A shipkeeper is employed by the trust and is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the vessel. He has worked hard in preparing the ship for the opening ceremony, including painting the upperdeck superstructure and the ships side as well as restoring the compartments within the ship to their original state. It was a nostalgic experience to return to familiar surroundings and find the familiar smell was still there and many nightmares, sorry memories. One of the continuing major problems is replacing equipment that had been removed during de-commissioning and de-storing before she was sold and several items such as a full outfit of Minesweeping Floats and Multiplanes are still missing.

When the Minewarfare Section ceased training on the Ton Class earlier this year, arrangements were made to donate the items of training equipment to the trust for display purposes onboard the BRONINGTON.

With the kind permission of DGST(N) and the Supply Officer HMS NELSON the equipment was collected by the trust in July last year. Items donated included models of the stern of a Minesweeper and a Minehunter both of which were in a pretty poor condition and required some extensive restoration work. On our visit to the ship SOMW and myself were delighted to see one of the models had been fully restored and formed part of a major static display in a compartment created from the Diesel Tanks and Sweep Store, now known as the Function Room. The model had been renovated so well it was hardly recognisable from the original and we were tempted to repossess it.

The Ton Class association have been involved in no small way helping research BRONINGTON's past and in the production of visual displays illustrating the history of the Class.

The opening ceremony was attended by many local dignitaries as well as those who in some way contributed to the restoration including:

- Admiral Sir John Cox RN Retd (President Ton Class Assn)
- Capt Jeremy Stewart RN Retd (Ex CMCM) (Chairman Ton Class Assn)
- Capt Roy Clare RN (Ex 1st Lieutenant of BRONINGTON)
- Mr Jack Worth (Hon Secretary Ton Class Association).

The Prince of Wales was welcomed by an impressive Guard of Honour and piping party formed by the local Sea Cadet Unit. He was then given a guided tour of the ship by John Gregory accompanied by the ex First Lieutenant, Captain R. A. G. Clare. His Royal Highness then unveiled the 5 foot wooden Ships Wheel which had been removed from the Tiller Flat and renovated, with a suitably engraved plaque attached. The Trust presented His Royal Highness with one of only two ties specially made to mark the occasion and baseball caps for Prince William and Prince Harry.

The day went extremely well and His Royal Highness seemed very impressed with the ship. He was pleased that at least one TON Class will be saved from the scrapyards and preserved for posterity. However he did point out that whilst he enjoyed his time in command of BRONINGTON he felt that the appointment suited younger men and that he would not relish the prospect of returning to such cramped conditions.

If you are in Manchester I can recommend a visit to BRONINGTON to see how she has been restored and if you can help the trust with any form of memorabilia concerning either BRONINGTON or the history of the TON's please contact me and I will put you in touch with the Trust. There is a suggestion that Ex BRONINGTON Ships Companies should convene for a reunion onboard the ship; so watch this space for further details. In the meantime, if any of you ex Tonners would like to join the Ton Class Association to keep in touch with old friends and to receive their regular issue of salty stories, then contact Mr Jack Worth at the following address for further details.

The Hon. Secretary,
Ton Class Association
Mr Jack Worth,
Amethyst,
Lerryn,
Lostwithiel,
Cornwall,
PL22 0QF



THE FUTURE OF GUNWHARF

by WO(MW) Dixie Dean

A question that is often asked of the Instructors and staff at the Minewarfare Section is: What is happening to the school when Gunwharf closes?

Well the short answer is that the Minewarfare Section, Maritime Trade and RNXS are planned to co-locate into Horton Block in HMS DOLPHIN.

Commander P. Ambrose Royal Navy has been appointed as Head of the Gunwharf Closure Project and has the unenviable task of getting a quart into a pint pot. All departments concerned have made their bids for Offices, Classrooms and Training Decks and how they should be located in relation to each other. The basic floor plans have been drawn up and staffed by individual departments so that last minute amendments/suggestions could be made before the final plans are drawn up. The Minewarfare Section will be housed on the present Ground, 1st and two thirds of the 2nd Floors. The Maritime Trade, RNXS and Administration Departments will be located in a new 3 storey extension to Horton Block.

The HUNT and SANDOWN Trainers will be located externally along with the PJT Classrooms and Contractors offices all in Hallamcabins away from Horton Block.

Sub Lieutenant George Turnbull and myself visited the facilities in HMS DOLPHIN and were more than impressed particularly with the RA's Bungalow and the Senior Rates Mess although one of the first tasks will be to present the mess with some 'target' memorabilia.

Wot about the Divers? I hear you ask, the Project Sponsors plan is to move the whole of Diving Training to Horsea Island, with an 'off Horsea' Base on the South Shore of Whale Island where the Diving Tenders etc. will run from. Lieutenant Commander Holloway is involved in a study into the way Navy Diving Training will fit in with Army Diving Training (REDE) which is also going to Horsea. The Diving Reporter will no doubt explain that one further.

The plans for the move are very much at the infant stage and there are no firm dates for the move as yet. As soon as the fog clears I'm sure my relief will write another dit.

Minesweeping Historical

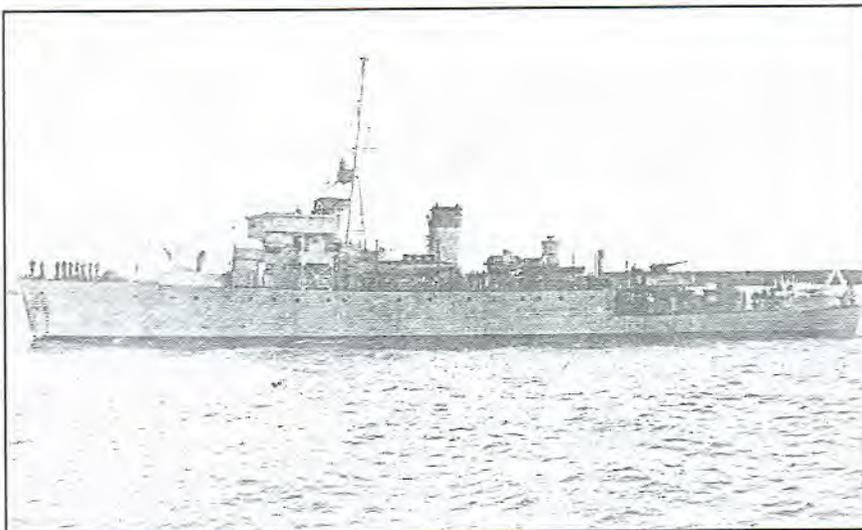
HMS PICKLE

PICKLE was one of the 98 ships of the Algerine Class Fleet Minesweeper built for the Royal Navy during the second World War. Laid down on 11 January 1943, launched on 3 August 1943 and completed on 15 October 1943 at the Belfast shipyard of Harland and Woollf. Her Pendant Number was J293.

975 tons Standard displacement; length 225 ft (oa), beam 35 1/2 ft. draught 11 ft; fitted with two-shaft Geared Turbines; speed 16 1/2 knots. Main Armament was a single 4-ins Q.F. Mark V (high angle mounting); anti-aircraft armament 4 single Oerlikons (20mm); anti-submarine armament 4 depth charge throwers and two DC rails (total 92 depth charges carried); Sensor equipment were Radar 271 sets (air/surface) and Asdic (A/S). Fitted with minesweeping gear - Oropesa sweeping gear for moored mines; LL electric cable for magnetic mines; and SA hammer and Fessenden Oscillator for acoustic mines. Complement about 115 officers and men.

PICKLE was attached to the newly forming 7th Minesweeping Flotilla, and after A/S work up at Tobermory and M/S work up at Granton joined **PELORUS** (Senior Officer) and the rest of the flotilla at Harwich in February 1944. Preparations for the forthcoming Operation Neptune (the naval part of the invasion of Normandy) included sweeping off the southern coast, and for the big event on 5/6 June **PICKLE** and the 7th MSF were attached to Force 'J'. (Commodore Geoffrey Oliver in the Headquarters ship **HILARY**) which made the assault at Courselles. The immediate job of the flotilla was to clear channel Number 8, and on completion they were to sweep and clear the area between channels 7 and 8. The 7th MSF had the unique distinction of being the leading ships of the invasion force and were the first ships to arrive at the beachhead of Normandy on 6th June. Following the landings, **PICKLE** and the 7th MSF were engaged during the next few weeks in sweeping anchorage areas and acting as escorts for convoys to and from the South Coast ports. On 2 August **PICKLE** went to South Shields for extensive repair and refit which lasted until 16 October.

PICKLE and the 7th MSF spent the next few months based at Plymouth, mainly on local escort duty before preparing to go out to the Far East to continue in the war against Japan. Most of the flotilla left UK in mid-April 1945 and **PICKLE** in company with another of the flotilla, **VESTAL**, sailed on 24 February from



Falmouth, escorting a 'flight' of Landing Craft and MFVs to Gibraltar. That same day the convoy was attacked by U-1203 which torpedoed and sank the trawler **ELLESMERE**. On 14 April **PICKLE** (by now the new Senior Officer ship) and **VESTAL** joined up with the remainder of the flotilla at Colombo.

The flotilla were soon in action, taking part on 1 May in Operation 'Dracula', the assault on Rangoon. Along with a Royal Indian Navy flotilla of 'Bathurst' minesweepers, **PICKLE** and the 7th MSF swept a channel for the invasion fleet and then acted as marking vessels. The landing was unopposed and Rangoon was entered on 3 May. After more sweeping **PICKLE** went to Port Elizabeth (South Africa) in mid June for a minor refit and some repairs, remaining there until 6 August. She was therefore absent when the five of the flotilla **PLUCKY**, **VESTAL**, **RIFLEMAN**, **PINCHER** and **SQUIRREL** took part in the ill-fated Operation 'Livery' - an offensive sweep off Phuket Island, supported by the battleship **NELSON** and the cruiser **SUSSEX** and aircraft-carriers and destroyers. On 24 July on the first day of the sweeping **SQUIRREL** was mined and had to be sunk by a destroyer. The next day the Force of ships was attacked by Japanese 'kamikaze' planes which concentrated on the sweepers. One crashed onto **VESTAL** killing many of the crew and breaking her back, and she was then sunk by our own forces. Thus in virtually the last sea operation, the last two major British warships to be sunk in World War Two were two Algerines. **PICKLE** rejoined the flotilla and with the remainder of the flotilla stayed in the far East, engaged in sweeping off Borneo and Malaya, until returning to the UK in September 1946. On arrival at Devonport **PICKLE** went into Reserve.

In 1951 **PICKLE** (now Pendant Number M293) was taken from Reserve and after refit joined the 4th Minesweeping Flotilla (in 1952 it became Squadron). Much of the time was taken up in minesweeping and other exercises with NATO ships, and in working with the Inshore Minesweeping Squadron from Harwich. In June 1953 **PICKLE** was one of 16 Algerines of the Royal Navy to take part in the Coronation review at Spithead. In November and December 1954 **PICKLE** went on loan to the Fishery Protection Squadron, taking part in several patrols in Icelandic waters.

In December 1955 the 4th MSS disbanded and **PICKLE** again went into Reserve at Devonport.

In August 1958 **PICKLE** was transferred to the Royal Ceylon Navy and commissioned as HMCyS **PARAKRAMA** on 18th August 1958. She provided training of personnel of HM Ceylonese Navy in minesweeping and formed part of the Minesweeping Squadron. On 13 December 1963 she was decommissioned and on 23 September she was sold to a Singapore shipbreaker's yard.

Battle Honours of H M S PICKLE

Trafalgar	1805
Baltic	1855
Normandy	1944
Burma	1945



Minewarfare Update

EXERCISE MINE DISPOSAL CHARGE (MDC)

The latest addition to the RCMDS training package is the **Exercise Mine Disposal Charge (MDC)**. The mass, size, shape and centre of gravity are identical to the warshot version (HE). Its purpose is to fully exercise the RCMD system, whilst allowing the charge itself to be recovered, reconditioned and re-used. The exercise MDC comprises of a two part cast aluminium alloy case.

By George Turnbull

The front section holds the firing mechanism, the air supply (To inflate the buoy cartridge) electronics and the compressed air release mechanism.

In the rear section is the buoy cartridge assembly (including a flashing light to aid recovery on the surface) and pinger (Transponder) to aid detection/recovery underwater.

There are two modes of recovery initiation. **“Operation Mode”**. When the firing mechanism receives the acoustic coded signal in its Command Window. **“Rescue Mode”** Automatically activated by a timer 2 hours after the release of the exercise MDC from the vehicle, if it has not received an acoustic triggering signal under normal operating conditions.

Both modes are characterised by the inflation of an encapsulated buoy which brings the exercise MDC to the surface. After its ascent the inflatable buoy maintains a vertical position on the surface. Recovery and location is aided by the flashing light. More detailed information can be found in BR 8944 (1C) Sect. 1 Chap 2.



● *Exercise MDC on recovery (Floats Vertical)*

● *Exercise MDC on Deck (Buoy inflated)*



Short Term Training Team (STTT) 'Maldivian Islands'

PO(D) J. Gofton

On the 10th of March there was a signal request for a S/R from the diving training school to teach the (National Security Service) (NSS) Air Diving and Mine Countermeasures. I was volunteered (Just in case my wife is reading) to fly out to the 'Sunny Maldives' From the 31st of July until the 5th of October the brief had consisted of: "We think they need this kind of training, and be flexible". A divers favourite word. However, I was not complaining, after all, divers are accustomed to flexibility. I planned on the worst and sent a stores requisition, with a list of requirements and eagerly awaited my departure date. Before I go any further here is a quick run down of the republic of Maldives.

The Maldives Archipelago consists of a chain of 19 Coral Atolls comprising of 1,200 islands, 202 of which are inhabited. The islands are small, and the highest point above sea level is approx 3 metres: The Capital, Male (population 50,000) is one mile long and half-a-mile across. The population of about 177,000 is of mixed descent. Islam is the state religion. The main sources of revenue for the Maldives are fishing (a magic place for Lobby's and Cray's) tourism and the licensing of shipping. (Flag of convenience).

On the 3rd November 1988, the Maldivians suffered their most serious coup attempt when some 400, mainly Sri Lankan Tamil mercenaries, led by Abdul Tuthuh, landed on Male and attempted to take over. The Maldivians called for help from the US, UK and India. India reacted swiftly, by airlifting 1,600 troops to the Maldives and dispatching three warships to the island. They succeeded in capturing the coup leaders, who had taken flight by ship.

India removed the bulk of its forces from the Maldives in December 1988. By the 3rd November 1989 the Indian E.O.D. team had won the task of harbour and coastal clearance. After the coup attempt the Maldives sought UK help in providing Military Training for their Paramilitary National Security Service (N.S.S.).

Once every year under the Government's funding, four servicemen are selected for short term training. In the past the Maldivian Government have only requested for arms, tactics, drill, medical skills and clerical organisation. However, they have had some training in diving (thanks to a Captain Royal Marines who just happened to be a ships diver officer) apparently he ran a few trial courses, I discovered during my stay in the Maldives that his training consisted mainly of lobby



hunting, which did little to enhance the expertise of Maldivian Divers.

The 31st eventually came and on arrival at the airport I met up with the two Colour Sergeants, but not the Major who had left a week early for planning and preparation, which was no good to me. We did not leave the U.K. until the 2nd, and I would like to give special thanks to the head of M.O.D. transport in Lymington for not delivering our stores in time for the original flight.

Nevertheless, 17 hrs later we landed in Male and were then whisked away like V.I.P.s to our resort island for recuperation after flying Club Class. The following day we were escorted to Girifushi training island (approx 400 by 500 metres) and introduced to the students, who consisted only of army personnel. I had to search for the students who were to take part in the diving training. The Major said good luck, call me if you need help and left me to my own devices. However, I caught up with them and found that all six of them had just undergone a medical with certificates to verify it.

An excellent start, I thought, until we mustered the equipment. The first week was dedicated to planning and preparation i.e. locally purchasing some more diving equipment, cordage, making concrete sinkers, and analysing the air from our new compressor which would be enough to sustain training to a safe degree. I managed to muster enough equipment to get the course up and running.

The students had limited knowledge in sport diving, so my first move was to give them an aptitude and progress from there. They were like fish in the sea, except they

did not have any concept of safety, and this was about to change.

I decided to run a Ships Divers Course with an additional two weeks of sea-bed searches, one week of compass swimming, and mine countermeasures theory.

The Major incorporated an exercise for the cadre course towards the end of their training and during that week the divers were involved. They were assigned with ships bottom, harbour and sea-bed searches and left to their own devices. By and large it had been a successful week. The course progressed slowly and had its ups and downs, this was due to a lack of support and poor resources. The students were exceptionally keen throughout their training, which made it all the more enjoyable. The students formed part of the Maldives Coastguard and Police Force, which gave them the authority to enforce the law as best they saw it, and near the end of the diving course they were enforcing many of the regulations that they were taught for the safe conduct of diving operations (i.e. having a flag and safety boat when diving is taking place) onto the sport diving clubs in the Maldives. So by all accounts a good impression had been left behind. They intend to request for further training, so stand-by SMOPS because they may request for a CD1 and 2JRS this time, as recommended. To tie it all up the Major and Drill Sergeant had a ceremonial parade. The ceremony was performed before the President of the Republic of Maldives in Male, who issued the course badges and trophies to the best students.



Minewarfare Reporter



The following text was taken from the opening paragraph of a joining letter which was sent to a S(MW):

I am writing to you as Divisional Officer of the Division you will be joining when you join HMS ----- Your Divisional Officer will be my relief!

● *Minewarfare Reporter
CPO (MW) Paul Cambell*

This thought provoking photograph was one of a series kindly supplied by Cdr G J Merrett (MCM3 until 10/9/92). It illustrates the recovery of the RCMD5 Mk2 exercise MDC. It was intended to run a "Caption Competition" based on this particular photograph however, the thought of the potential answers filled the editorial staff with dread and any comments would probably be unprintable anyway. Therefore we leave the caption to your imagination and mess deck humour.



● *CPO(MW) Paul Harmer receives his
BEM from Admiral JJ Black, GBE, KCB,
DSO*

CPO(MW) Paul Harmer was presented with the British Empire Medal (BEM) by Admiral JJ Black, GBE, KCB, DSO, onboard Nelson's Flagship HMS VICTORY in September 1992. CPO(MW) Harmer was awarded the medal in recognition of his efforts during the recent Gulf crisis when he was attached to CTU 321.1.2 (MCM 2) as the Staff CPO(MW). Often working in excess of 18 hours per day in the most arduous of conditions. Tasking of the 5 MCMV's on station was actioned from the Survey Vessel HMS HERALD where Paul states that he had a happy but rather compacted existence, particularly when he took up residence in the photographic darkroom. His other claim to fame is that he served in the Second MCM Squadron as an AB(MW), LS(MW), PO(MW) and finally as the CPO(MW) on consecutive sea drafts. Sadly Paul leaves active service in the Royal Navy in Dec 92. However he takes up a new vocation as an RN Careers Adviser in Jan 93. Good Luck.



TWO YEARS WITH THE OGGIES— A PO DIVERS LOT

It was with a certain unease, I joined the Plymouth Clearance Diving Unit after completion of PO(D) qualifying course in October 1990. Coming from a predominantly saturation background, with the navy's deep diving capability slowly, but surely sinking this was most certainly the turning point of my career.

The unit which is currently operating at full strength with Lt. Cdr McAlear in the chair and Lt Hill D.O.I.C. supported by fellow deeps Warrant Officer (Scouse) Kidman, Chief Petty Officer Chris Ballinger and myself on the operation side. With Chief Petty Officer (Lawry) Lawrence currently serving on United Nation duties in Cambodia, Chief Petty Officer (Nelly) Nilson has assumed the responsibilities of Demolitions and training. We are enhanced with two Petty Officer Diver's Harry Cripps and Mac McGrath with five leading hands and nine Able Seaman this is the current line up of the Devondales.

By and large the unit's main role is underwater engineering which we undertake day in day out most of the year, supporting Type 21, 22, 23 and Leander class frigates, "T" and "S" Class submarines and anything else that ventures into the swamp. (Possibly even Trident class!)

The work varies from simple ship's divers tasks up to blade and dome changes even stabiliser changes using a modified HEDLEY PURVIS hydraulic ram and BROCO for burning and welding lock bars and access plates. The acoustic cladding of submarines and underwater inspection videos also occur on a regular basis. Some of the above have even been carried out in the sunnier climes of CURASAO and GIBRALTAR.

On the training side the unit carries out monthly dippers and aptitudes on a weekly basis and DEMS courses for the fleet. Operational training for the unit is carried out when the opportunity arises, which is not as often as is essential.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal however is a slightly different story as the Plymouth unit is a lot quieter than other units for reaction tasks, the planned ops are being reduced due to the lack of funds. The unit is presently clearing ranges in SILLOUTH, DRIGG and ESKMEELS in the northwest and the GOWER PENNINSULA and CLEVEDON in the south, with the latter being sacrificed, which is unfortunate as a lot of ordnance with historic bearing has been found on the range and distributed to museums around

Petty Officer Rick Ricard

the country with some even added to the extensive collection at DEODS namely a WHITWORTH round being a relatively rare hexagonal twisted projectile. Built by the British, used in the Crimean war and eventually sold to the Americans and subsequently used in their civil war. The range consists mainly of naval RMLs, RBLs and early cannonballs. The unit has even encountered an A MK 6 at the low water mark.

The IED side of life is reasonably busy with a relatively large area to cover and no Army unit parked on our doorstep to offer assistance. The tasks are wide and varied, but with the Admirals photograph collection, the controlled destruction of an illegally parked car and a real criminal IED at Dartmouth to name but a few almost makes those licensing exercises worthwhile.

With the call of the sea looming on the horizon, I can look back at two very eventful years with the Oggies and their work hard, play hard routines which, I will no doubt, miss. I am happy to report that a PO divers lot is still a happy one in Devonport.



THE ALTERNATIVE DIVER

By Lt S M Marshall OIC FDU1

The RN Clearance Diver, as we all know, is an adaptable and flexible beast, so when the Fleet Diving Group formed Fleet Diving Unit One (FDU1) to be part of the RN's contribution to the Maritime Counterterrorist (MCT) organisation, it was seen as a new challenge and, "this could be fun". Of course many of you will remember that the Rosyth and Plymouth Teams both have a responsibility for this role in the early 80s but now we had a unit whose prime role was MCT and it was a steep leaning curve.

I would therefore like to use this opportunity to bring everyone up to date with where the unit now finds themselves and probably, to generate some interest amongst those of you out there, that fancy doing something a little different during your careers in the Branch.

The unit was formed in 1985 and immediately commenced kitting itself out with the required equipment to assault oilrigs, slide down ropes out of helicopters and jump out of aeroplanes!! Of course the Terms of Reference for the unit were in a state of perpetual development at this time, but the bottom line was that the unit would provide underwater Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) cover for the MCT Assault Force and a diving capability to 54 metres if needed. The Branch had of course had the responsibility for above water IEDD on UK shipping and Offshore Energy Installations (OEI) but for some odd reason this had been given to the RAOC and our role in the MCT organisation was somewhat eroded in the early stages.

As with all matters concerning terrorism, the British Government takes the threat to our shipping and OEI's very seriously and the various units from all three services that have a commitment to MCT, form a very large organisation. The force is essentially run by M Squadron, Royal Marines, at Poole and they are responsible for coordinating the almost

continuous training that is required to keep such a force at a high degree of readiness and at very short notice to react should they be needed. Although the various different units, such as the RM's, FDU1, PEODS, RN and RAF helo squadrons, RIB crews etc all have specific tasks with regard to MCT, all are very closely linked and critical to each other. It is this area where FDU1 has now finally established and proven itself as an integral part of the MCT organisation.

I mentioned before that the RAOC were responsible for above water IEDD and to conduct this they commit the Parachute EOD section (PEODS). We work very closely with them and over the past 10 years, our roles have become clearly defined. As experienced LAR 5 divers and at home in boats (I think)!! FDU1 were the best choice to provide the RM specialists with IEDD support during the Assault phase of an MCT operation. PEODS would then support the helo borne troops in the same way and once we were all on the target and released by our respective customers, we would co-locate to continue IEDD as required. This operating procedure now works very well and means that each unit can concentrate on its most common methods of getting to the target. In our case this is normally by the underwater or under way option and we train regularly with the RMs to improve these skills. In addition the airborne option is practised frequently as is parachuting into the sea, a role also required in our secondary task of supporting SPAG, HMS DOLPHIN.

Specialised kit is obviously very important to us and it has been a long, hard and frustrating struggle to equip the unit properly. Many items are only available through specific channels and in addition, we have designed our own kit for carrying equipment to the target. Local purchasing ability is often critical and recently, efforts have been made to make the unit self

supporting so that we are not reliant on the stores set up in M Squadron. This is now coming to fruition thanks to the excellent understanding and support of DGST(N), Bath. Training for the MCT role requires much planning and dedication, particularly when you take into account the fact that all members of the unit are, first and foremost, Clearance Divers and have to maintain standards accordingly. We regularly support the other two FDG units and, as experienced during the Gulf War, 5 members of the unit operated largely in the conventional EOD role in and around Kuwait. Small Arms practice, mainly with the 9mm pistol, is planned at least once a month and more specialised small arms training with the RMs, almost as frequently. The unit are also responsible for conducting underwater attacks against RN ships during exercises to test their defence against this form of sabotage and to that end LAR 5 swimming ability is of paramount importance. During that fairly brief indication of the skills required by members of FDU1, it is clear that fitness plays a very big part in the unit. The ability to swim underwater for a long distance, carrying up 40 lbs of kit before climbing the 50 ft side of a ship, up a thin caving ladder, donning a respirator and conducting an MCT operation, does not come without continual fitness training. In summary then, I feel that FDU1 have now finally established themselves in the important role of MCT, thanks to the hard work of a host of people over the past 7 years. We are a specialist unit but with people who are experienced and fully trained Clearance Divers first and foremost. If you are a LS (D) or higher, fancy doing something a bit different, like being physically fit and can sleep easily on the floor of an aircraft hanger, then volunteer for FDU1. You won't be disappointed!!

UXB

SO YOU WANT A DRAFT TO A BOMB TEAM . . .

By Lieut Ian Morton

At 0615 on Monday morning the phone rang waking the young lady sleeping beside me. It was the pleasant voice of the Joint Services Explosive Ordnance Disposal Operations Centre, who else would be awake at this time?

A large lump of ordnance onboard a fishing trawler in the north sea, contact Humber Coastguard, four feet long, two and a half feet across, pointed at one end, some sort of fin type thing at the back end. Get up, page the duty watch, meet in Gunwharf before 7 am. It is a 'C2', blue lights, and horns if we meet heavy traffic. Bridlington over 300 miles. The quickest way is straight north through Newbury where we use the lights and horns for the first time once through there its a clear road all the way until we get to where we leave the motorway network. Several telephone calls on the way tell us that the trawler is making slow progress in the north easterly gale towards Bridlington her ETA is going to be just before us. What's ours about 1300 I tell the Coastguard. The phone rings 'Skipper of the Trawler here shall we keep the bomb wet, its a big one! and its making hissing noises. Well yes I tell him and reassure him that we will be there soon.

1310 arrive at Bridlington Pier, TV cameras, Coastguard, lots of people, TV camera thrust in window of Landrover, What are you going to do says keen reporter. A moments thought by me 'Turn that camera off for a minute, It has been a long time hurtling the motorway from Portsmouth the first thing we want to do is stretch our legs in the direction of that building over there what has a sign over the top—'Gents'. That over the camera rolling again I give a brief statement saying that my team will get out to the trawler and assess the situation but probably remove the bomb from the trawler and detonate it on the sea-bed. Sounds easy, looking at the sea I don't think this one is going to be that easy. Smile at the camera and ask them to get out of the way, let's get on with the job.

A couple of hours later we have managed to swing the thousand pound monster overboard having had to make a bag for it out of fishing net. Cut the main trawl wire and the trawler is free to move away, "foul anchor" shouts the mate. It's another wire round the anchor, out cutting gear and we are soon free. A safe anchorage is round and the lifeboat is called alongside with diving gear which is transferred to the Gemini and we make our way to the bomb over the waves now some 15 to 20 feet high, a couple of 4lb packs and we are set up for a big bang, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1—bang the packs, no high order, just a LL float high in the air. Described in the paper as destroyed with hardly a ripple. Wet and disappointed we head for the lifeboat and shore. Soaked, but relieved another job is successfully completed. Take a basket of lobsters and fish says the skipper of the much happier trawler, and hand us a basket big enough to feed the 5000.

Watch the TV news in the lifeboat house over a warming cup of coffee and get into some dry clothes. A night in Bridlington is called for and we park at the police station then chauffeured to a local recommended hostelry for an overnight rest.

Tuesday morning, early breakfast and on the road for Portsmouth, cooked and frozen lobsters in the back of the rover we make good time towards the south. The phone rings,

'Yarmouth Coastguard here says the voice at the other end, we have a bomb in a school in Norfolk where are you we know you are going south? Has it been reported to the Police? Yes says the Coastguard its them that told us, now we are telling you. We thought you might not be too far away, looking up to see the sign for National Exhibition Centre. Somewhere near Birmingham I reply, but leave it with me I will get someone to the school. A call to Didcot with all the details ends with a map reading discussion on how to get from Birmingham to Norfolk. Yes we got the job!

Three pm we arrive at Heacham school with the local policeman at the front. Its obvious where the bomb is, all cordoned off with



● *Portsmouth Area Clearance Diving Unit*

a Danger UXB sign in the middle of the school playing field. Let's have a look then, an RAF practice bomb and the pin is still in, good clean condition. Yes says the schoolteacher little Johnny cleaned it up last night before bringing it to school in a Tesco's bag this morning!

Not a good idea says I, if dropped on its nose smoke and flame come out the back end. Let's destroy it where it is and show the schoolchildren what we do, and why they shouldn't bring bombs to school. All ready to destroy the bomb and dig a hole to plant a tree. The Headmistress seems a likely candidate to fire the charge, the biggest thrill of her day. A rousing cheer and off we go, now 1630 and we have driven over 350 miles. A stop in Norfolk overnight is called for, the command decision is made. A little liaison with the new Coastguard Sector Officer in his office and over a beer later keeps me working till late evening.

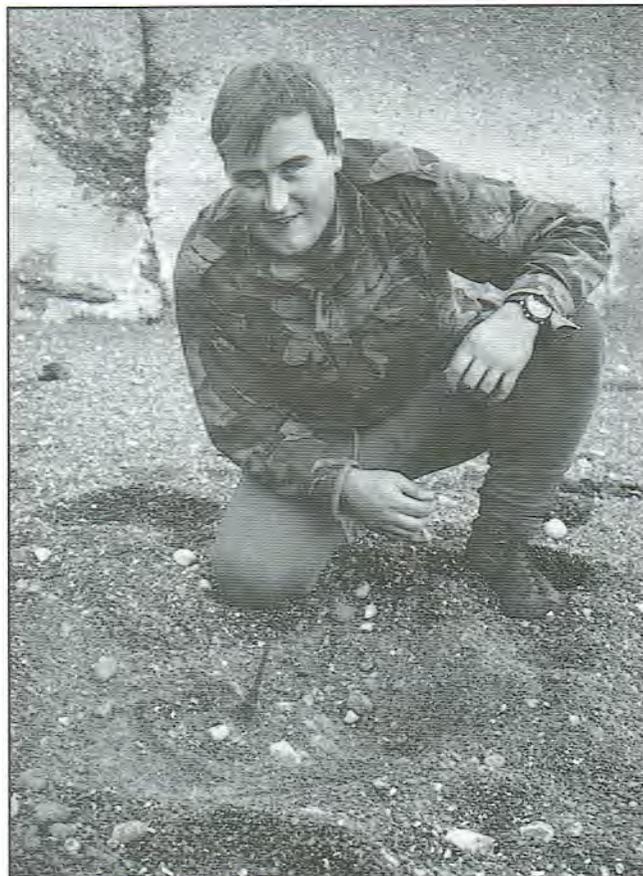
Next morning bright and early we make a fresh start for Portsmouth but having a job to do on the way at Littlehampton we travel by M11, M25, M23 and A roads to the aggregate company which has a dustbin full of assorted 1st and 2nd War shells fresh from the sea-bed, carefully sort them into inert, dangerous (rusty and explosive) and unsure what it is (extremely dangerous). Call the local Coastguard and drive gingerly to the beach for a bang. The cellphone rings just as we get to the beach, 'It's the office here Boss another job for you, at Hythe, mines on the beach, two of us from this week's duty watch will be out to relieve and let last week's duty watch have a break. OK get here as soon as you can, I will get this job finished, see you soon. The tide is out, ideal well away from the dunes, (a site of special scientific interest), I knew that from the letter of complaint from the local birdwatcher who had been startled the last time by Chief was here. Which kind of birdwatching had he been doing anyway! Lovely bang and pack up the gear again. Time for a cup of coffee. Blue Sherpa coming down the road, it is the chaps I should have taken with me on Monday. A few



minutes later, Coastguard thanked and we are on the way to Hythe. Cellphone again (glad I'm not paying) and the Police arrive in front of the Rover to lead us safely to Hythe. Time now 1315, beginning to feel weary already but I have a fresh team with me who are ready to tackle anything.

Not much later at Hythe (a couple of hours), and we are met by a selection of people on the promenade, a policeman makes his way towards the Rover. Good we think someone in charge, where is my comb says the AB in the back the TV is over there! I wouldn't let the TV people near the mines until you arrived says the very hassled constable, you know what they're like. They have sent for someone senior and have been calling my station, but I told them its not up to me but Bomb Disposal, so now you are here you can sort it out. OK, I say to the PC you keep the public out and I'll deal with the TV, perhaps you saw

us in the 999 Series we are experienced with TV. Fall the TV crew in and go and have a look at the job, telling them to keep out of the way until I am ready for them. Don't be too long says



● *Mine tripped over at Hythe*

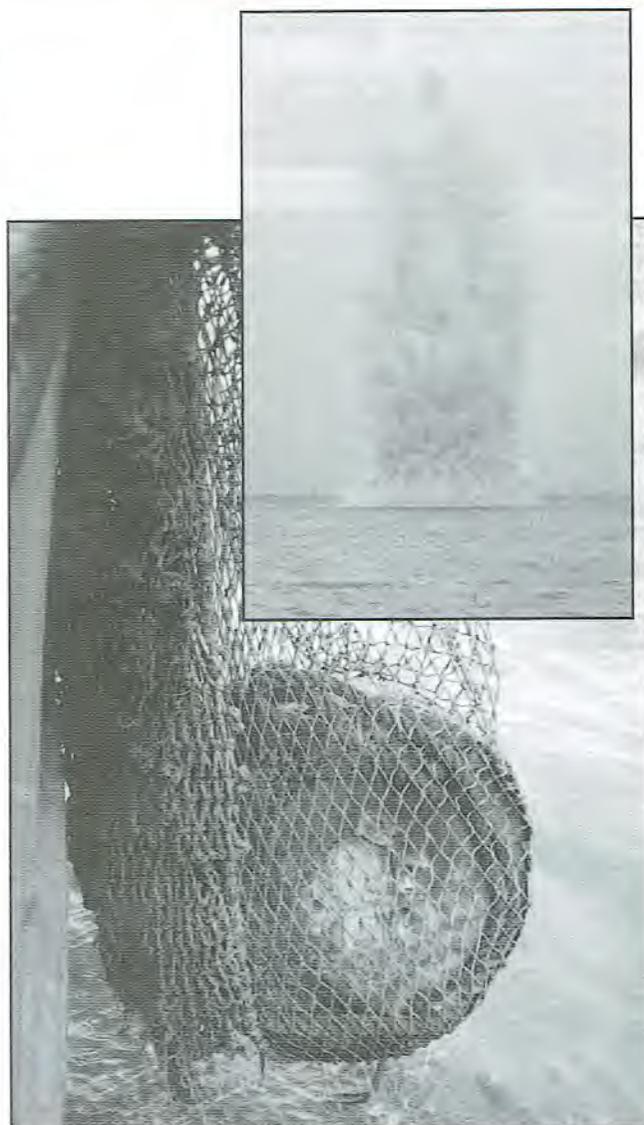
the one with the camera, its not long to the six o'clock news. Three beach mines over there says the witness. We check them over, two are just tops with nothing underneath but one is whole and full of explosive. Got some sandbags for you says a voice from over the seawall, the army didn't use any yesterday and the shingle went everywhere. They blew up one exactly the same, funny how I keep finding them, it's the scaffolding I say that's what they laid them attached to. I'm clearing the scaffolding off the beach says the contractor. Poor chap I think to myself. He has a more dangerous job than me. Ready detonator placed in our first charge, I step back to check everything is alright and stumble over a spike sticking up out of the shingle. Oh ***** I've just found another, a good job it didn't work the way it was meant to. Get the TV cameras set up supply them with a lovely shot of a quick way to dig a big hole, on the beach and in the seawall in one, tell them the beach is a dangerous place and send them packing out of the way so that we can deal with the one I tripped over. After putting a lot more effort into trying to find any more live mines and being unsuccessful we call it a day and explain to the authorities that there is nothing more to be done today. The tide is about to cover the beach and it will be safe until the next day (3 more mines found). Back in the Rover, I've got this urge to try and make Portsmouth. I explain to my still fresh crew, however by the time we reach Eastbourne at 2100 it has faded somewhat. Just as well for at 0730 (its now Thursday) Beep-Beep-Beep, excuse me, and off I go to phone the Ops centre.

Continued overleaf

UXB

"Good morning Sir, got a bomb for you." "Where?" I say. "Rye" says she. "No where?" I say. "RYE" says she. OK lads, job on. Finish breakfast and we are off in an easterly direction with Portsmouth astern. A lovely little fishing town Rye was only just over an hour away, thank goodness we didn't make Portsmouth last night I think to myself. Fishing boat alongside and bomb turns out to be a very large shell. What we going to do with this Boss says Hooky, after a moments thought I realise we are only a stones throw from Lydd ranges and it looks safe enough to transport. 1000 just about to fire, the phone rings, JSEODOC, Corporal BULL here you are having a good week Sir, Yes where next I say. Mortar on Margate seafront and passes the rest of the details. Standby Firing Now! Back in the Rover and off to Margate, nice cafe on the beach where we can have lunch after the job I say. 1200 arrive at Margate seafront, lots of police, Coastguard, haven't even got out Rover and phone rings, Cpl BULL again got another C2 for you he laughs. Tell him to ring back in five minutes as we have just arrived at Margate. Inspect mortar, turns out to be inert, but dispose of it anyway as the emergency services had everything done so well and it would have been disappointing for them not to have had a small bang. 1220. Cpl BULL rings back got a nice one for you Sir, four rocket tubes at Bradwell, its a C2 lots of bait diggers in the area. The police Inspector seeing the look of dismay on my face volunteers to lead us to the nearest petrol station so that we can fill the tank for the second time that day. 1500 R/V with Coastguard Bradwell and he leads out onto the marshes then onto the mud, ten minutes in the mud and you realise why we used to do mud runs, four big tubes from the war yes, rocket assisted takeoff from the airfield which used to be just over there, but I haven't seen these four before. Look inert to me says Hooky by now up to his waist in mud checking inside the rockets, we'll blow them anyway and they won't get reported again. I have a wander around with the Coastguard checking nothing else dangerous in the area, look there are a couple of grenades, that rubble over there was found to contain lots of them about fifteen years ago. We look for more but I only fine one lump of metal which looks as if it might be one. Ready for the dets shouts Hooky. All four rockets ready we retire to a safe distance upwind. Standby firing, time 1620. The bang is big, two of the rockets have all but disappeared completely. A high order there says Hooky, yes I say. Good job the nearest people out on the mud are over a mile away. A cup of tea and a wash at my place says the Coastguard, splendid says I. Ring JSEODOC, Cpl BULL is off duty now but they have no more jobs and they wish us well on our drive to Portsmouth. 1800 drive in McDonalds somewhere just north of Dartford Bridge, we never did stop at Margate for lunch. The big Macs consumed we cruise to Portsmouth, return explosives (one piece of plastic and three dets) not a lot from a whole box. 2130 open front door of house, where have you been says the wife. A long story says I.

Friday 0750 back at the office hoping to get the week's accumulated paperwork cleared, the phone rings, Job for you Boss, not again I say. A mine in a fishing boat just off West Mersea, a mile and a half from where I was last night. Speak to the fishing boat skipper, he knows what to do he had a big shiny German one last week, your Chief did that one he says. I've put this one near the same place, but the tide won't be slack till 1730 so you don't have to rush. Good I think, I'll get some work done here then get home for some clean civvies as we will probably be out all night. At home getting the grip repacked and the phone rings, another job Boss, a suspect briefcase in a local establishment. Vehicle on its way to get you and take you to the scene. Arrive within minutes at establishment, dispose of briefcase and place pieces in large bag and depart as the telephone rings at the main gate, I've left my briefcase about an hour ago says the caller. Time I left, I say to the Officer in Charge another job to go to.



● *Mine case in net at W Mersea*

1145 leave the office in Rover, a different one than the last four days. We get as far as a couple of miles up the A3(M) and it refuses to go over 50mph. It has just been returned from having that very problem fixed. Downhill to Portsmouth, back and change over Rovers again. Now we are running out of sufficient time to make the R/V with fisherman. Driving quickly we arrive at West Mersea at 1615 unload, rigging, gemini, diving gear and off we go out into the River Blackwater estuary. Its a very old charge case from a buoyant mine, put the usual four pound pack on it light the safety fuse and retire to a safe distance. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 BANG almost the biggest of the week, and very satisfying to see 300ft of water in the air. That were nearly as impressive as last week's German one says the fisherman. Have you got a claim form for me to fill in.

Back ashore some hours later, gemini back on roof, diving gear inside and foul weather gear off, its now 2130, we're not going to Portsmouth are we Boss asks Hooky. No, I'm cold tired and hungry.

The Team arrived back at Gunwharf at 1230 on Saturday having travelled nearly 3000 miles and carried out nine different tasks disposing of over a ton of explosives. This is a true account of a recent week on the road.



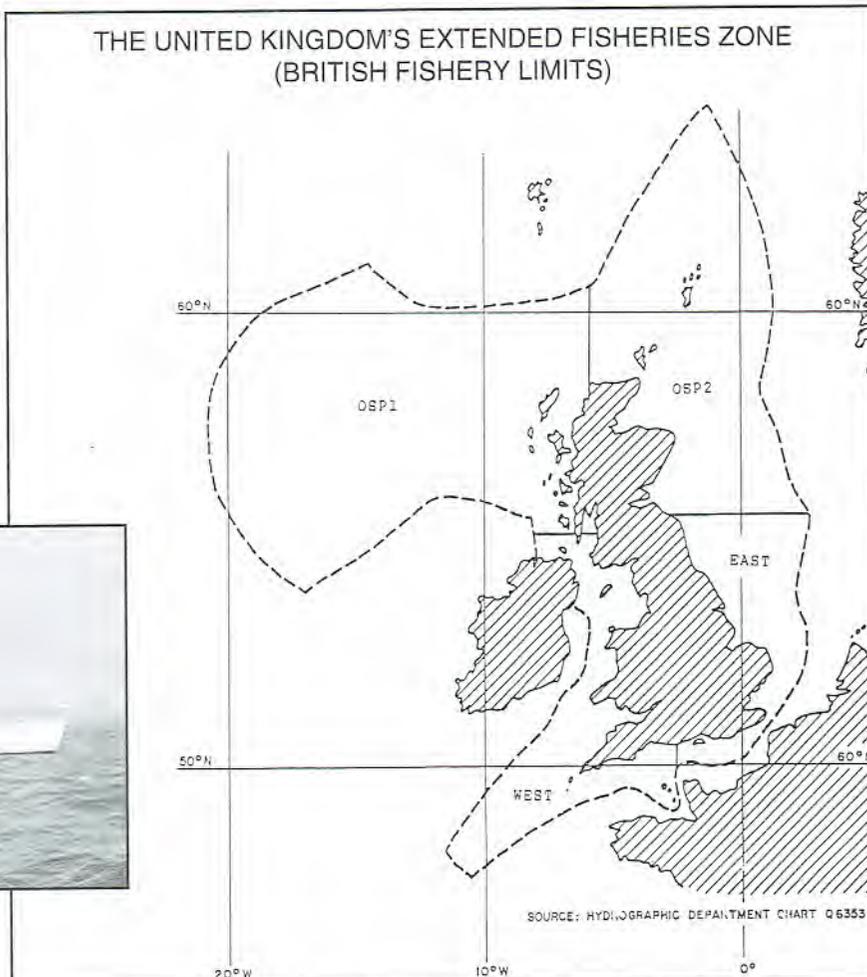
Fishery Protection

FISHERY PROTECTION AND THE MINEWARFARE RATE

By Pawl Stockley

When you think of the Minor War Vessel Flotilla how many of you only ever consider the Mine Counter Measures Vessels? The Fishery Protection Squadron currently comprises of seven Island class offshore patrol vessels (OPV1), one Castle class offshore patrol vessels (OPV2, the second of class on "permanent loan" to CinCFleet in the South Atlantic, but still staffed by CFP) and one modified River class minesweeper fleet (MSF). In addition, the Squadron is augmented by two Ton class vessels of MCM and two Hunt class vessels supplied by MCM1 and MCM2. These vessels remain under their parent staff though under CFP opcon.

Ships of the Squadron currently undertake more sea-time than ever before as fleetwide cutbacks have steadily reduced numbers whilst the task intensifies. As the Fisheries legislations become ever more complicated the pressure



● **Island Class on Fishery Protection Duties**

upon the fisherman to break the rules becomes more intense and subsequently enforcement effort increases in parallel. Not that "Fish" is all fish. As often the only Naval presence at sea in home waters the Squadron provides "UK Limited's" permanently on-call task force. Assistance is provided to many other authorities, be it keeping a watchful eye on offshore gas and oil installations, providing a platform for Marine Counter Terrorist operations, Search and Rescue/Ship to ship firefighting for HM Coastguard or work with Customs and Excise in the national battle against the drug traffickers. Intermeshed with additional fish tasks such as separation of battling fishing vessels of different nationalities and silent hour boardings of fishing vessels either whilst unloading alongside or at sea in prohibited grounds, ensures the ships working in an area covering 270,000 square miles of sea are kept very busy. Our vessels also remain at sea regardless of inclement weather as do the larger fishing vessels, so when others run for harbour the FP ships brace themselves and continue.

Why are there Minewarfare rates in the Squadron? The Squadron Staff Chiefs job has always been a CPO (MW) billet because there used to be so many Ton MCMVs in the

Squadron. Although the MCM element of the job is now greatly reduced it also makes sense to have your Chief Petty Officer to be small ship orientated and used to working independently, often at the outside parameters of normal Naval practice or in poor weather conditions in small ships.

In the ships companys, LS(MW) serve as No 2 to a LS(Sea) who is CBM. Often the CBM is in his first draft as a seaman specialist and also his first small ship. He can learn much from a LS(MW) serving as a LS(Any). Many LS(MW) enjoy fish boats as it is the opportunity to be involved in something different and to enhance their knowledge of seamanship, the OPVs often being involved in operational tows and OpRas.

The AB(MW) also serves as an "Any" rating. If you enjoy driving Rigid Inflatable Boats in arduous conditions for a living, are self motivated and capable of working unsupervised we have got the job for you. Task book training does present a problem for MW rates in the Squadron. Only the MSF carries MW related BRs. I hold a set in the Staff office that ships companies may draw on loan, otherwise we rely on arranging temporary loan drafts to Hunt

Class. Travel expenses have to be found to match the location of the two ships in question so that is not always possible, and the receiving ships reluctance to send a hand to the OPV in exchange sometimes trips us up. It can be achieved by the self motivated though, four AB(MWs) from SOBORTON passed the Wpe prior to the ships disposal, when did four ABs from one Hunt last pass the same board? The bottom line is however that it is not a post course training ground. I would not advocate a LS(MW) coming to an OPV direct from course as he would not have the opportunity to consolidate his newly acquired knowledge, likewise there are no training billets for a young S(MW).

For those of you that have never served with the Fish Squadron, I hope I have gone some way to providing a brief insight into the ships and men that protect our coasts during peacetime, never exercising but doing their job for real, frequently spending three or four months out of base port prior to a quiet and unobtrusive return . . . and not expecting a pipe band and families on the jetty!

Pawl Stockley
CPO(MW) and British Sea Fisheries Officer (BSFO)
Fishery Protection Squadron Staff

FDU 2

Six Months in the Life of FDU 2 - “Not all sun and Sangria”

Xmas Leave had finished, 1992 had begun, FDU 2 had finished their last duty as Standby element over the Xmas period. 0800 on the morning of 6 January and all Unit members returned to Gunwharf. Within no time, all the various items of equipment were off the shelves and being maintained, cleaned, charged and readied for use, to ensure that the Unit was ready in all respects for any operation. Some of the Unit off to DCIEM in Canada for experimental diving, some on to a Stud Welding Course, and some to a NILE course. Middle of Jan arrived and we found ourselves in Horsea for refresher training and trials. Snoopy lights were fitted to the KMB hard shells to see if suited to 75m diving, a blade change was conducted to gain familiarity with the Hedley Purvis hydraulic torque wrench, and u/w cameras, both still and video, are used to ensure a record is kept. Hot water suits and Superlight 17 were used to provide some comfort in the lake in winter and provide the protection necessary when doing some oxy-arc cutting. With all Unit members worked up in the equipment once again the wait was on for a real job to come in.

But no, the first week of Feb had us back up in the lake on a LAR 5 refresher course for compass swimming after a day in the Vernon tank conducting ditching drills, buddy breathing and ladder climbing. Reminders on how to rig and lay light jackstays for the new joiners were thrown in before we found ourselves in 3 Basin Portsmouth dockyard, laying heavy jackstays and rigged for diving in oil polluted waters - where was all this sun, sea and golden beaches I was promised prior to joining? A day in the DRIU at Phoenix (in case we're embarked in a RFA again the Boss says!) and then to Yeovilton to study Ejector seats and go through the dunker. Up to Shoeburyness next to refamiliarise us with demolition and low order techniques against 1000lb bombs and mine charge cases.

Maybe March would bring us some work? In fact March was taken up by a 75m deep diving work up running out of Oban. The first week to 54m using DSSCCD (compass swims again but this time at night!) with a trial on the DSSCCA Type B set thrown in. This trial was monitored by CWTA and DGUW (N) and involved working at its max depth and for long endurances. I am sure the Type stands for big and heavy! For the second week of the work up we are joined by some of FDU 3 and 1 to dive to 50m on air but conducted using 75m drills and oxygen stops. Diving on KMB 18, emergencies were continually exercised, ie. comms failure, main supply

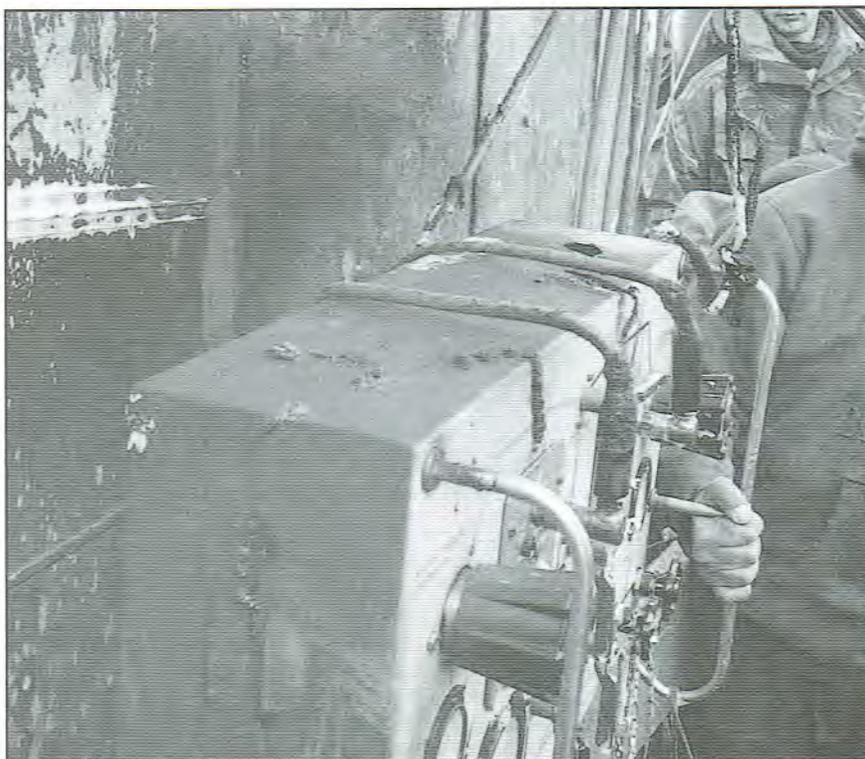


● Portable De-Con Tam Shower

failure, panel drills for O2 hits, DCS Type 1 and 2 with subsequent treatments, O2 hits underwater, etc. etc. By the end of this week we were all ready to progress of 75m on heliox. No more drills, everything was for real.

All was going well with over half of us down to 75m, when at the end of this third week we had a major explosion on the oxygen supply side of the panel whilst two divers were at depth about to start on oxygen stops. The explosion occurred just as both divers started to purge and resulted in fierce flames shooting from the panel in all directions. Luckily the supply was quickly shut off and the flames extinguished without anyone being injured. By this time the divers, unaware of what was happening on the surface except that they had no gas, had gone on to Bale-out and when told to do so, surfaced to be treated for omitted decompression: a table 61 which extended to a Table 62. Poor Si Marston, this was his first dive to 75m as well - we assured him it always happens like this. With everyone well on completion of the treatment two days of loadout drills were conducted on air to exercise 75m from the lifeguard inflatable.

Back to Portsmouth to deprep from 75m and prep for two NATO exercises. With Easter Leave thrown in as well it was a rush to get ready but the first Unit got away on 24 April to Denmark for Ex Blue Harrier. Two elements deployed by road to Hanstholm in Northern Denmark to search a large open water area around Roshage Pier. 10 mines and decoys were



● *Mix gas/oxygen switch over gas supply pannel (Oxygen explosion).*

laid of which we found 7. We are sure the others were dragged clear by fishing vessels!

Meanwhile a second enhanced element of 8 had deployed by air to Sicilly for Ex Damsel Fair with the Italians, French,

Turkish and Americans. In very difficult conditions only one mine was found but at least that was 100% better than the Americans! Two good exercises had taken place which fully proved the Units ability to deploy by road and air, to play an effective part in a multinational MCM clearance.

All Units were returned to Gunwharf by mid May where we had two visits, the first by CINCFLEET and then as if he wasn't high enough, the First Sea Lord! All aspects of the Units operations were demonstrated to show that we just aren't one helluva good looking bunch of divers! Into June and maintenance continues to repair and replace the gear that was damaged or lost whilst away on deployment. Continuation training however doesn't stop and we have been trialling a new type of mine lifting bag with remote activation devices, as well as trying to find our way around the Solent using portable Satellite Navigation systems. We found ourselves abseiling down the side of the old HMS ENDURANCE and even working down with PCDU to gain some valuable experience in practical u/w engineering. With some of the Unit about to return from an overland deployment to Genoa, Italy from some engineering work, the Unit is about to return to full strength and be once again ready for any job worldwide. A busy and varied 6 months so far this year and with further workups in Falmouth and Scotland plus further deployments abroad it looks as though it is only the start.



● *KMB hard shell fitted with U/W lighting*



Inspectorate

DIVING INSPECTORATE

From the Inspector or Diving

The Diving Inspectorate is:

Lt. Cdr. Jon Chapple	Inspector of Diving	Tel: PNB 24876
WO(D) Mo Crang	Inspector of Clearance Diving	24866
WO(D) Bob Oulds	Inspector of Ships Diving	24583
CPOMEA Robert Knights	Inspector of Engineering (Diving)	24904
CPOMEA Stuart Lake	Defect Reporting Desk (S2022)	24904
POMA Ian Calvert	Inspector Medical	24530

Role of the Inspectorate

For those who are unaware of the role and tasks of the Inspectorate, our primary role is to monitor diving and EOD practices and procedures throughout the Fleet on behalf of SofD (COMMW) to identify operational capability and to enhance safety.

Translated into plain English this means that the Inspectorate assist and advise all customer units on safety, procedures and equipment, conduct annual Inspections of shore-based CDU/CDE, Special Forces and other diving units (i.e. MDT Dept of SMOPS, DEODS, SAR Divers) as requested, maintain technical responsibility for all diving equipment (acting as the focal point for all S2022 defect reporting and MMS amendment action) and work as the naval drill coordinator and desk officer for BR 2806, BR 5063 and other diving/EOD operator publications.

All this means that we usually have full in-trays but we try to ensure that nothing remains at the 3 msw stop for too long. Enquiries are taken at any time (when was the last time you tried to call and the telephones weren't busy?) and we always ensure that an answer is given. We know that the question wouldn't have been asked if it wasn't important to someone... The message is "If in doubt, ask."

H & S Regulations

One point to bear in mind is that, although we are sometimes viewed as the creator of a myriad of rules and regulation, especially in the area of Health and Safety, in reality we are merely implementing rules imposed on us in common with the rest of the UK population. Since many of our activities cut across various H & S boundaries (i.e. diving, dangerous goods (explosives, chemicals), pressurised gas systems, noise) there are consequently a large number of regs which apply. Don't blame the messenger! We are all subject to the rules and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that divers and EOD operators comply. MOD policy is contained in DC1 GEN 241/91 and JSP 375 Vol 1 (MOD Health and Safety Handbook). Discussions are underway with HSE to clarify the position further.

S2022 Defect Reporting

Responsibility for S2022 processing and response transferred to the Inspectorate on 1 Oct 92 (as promulgated by DSM 29/92). This important step has enhanced the SofD input into the investigation and subsequent rectification of identified problems with equipment and technical handbooks. In the past I know that there have been misgivings over the usefulness of the S2022 system but the system is the only method of documenting a problem with equipment/publications and initiating the action to have it solved. It is there to be used. All S2022s are actioned by the Defect Reporting desk and enquiries are welcomed (PNB extension 24904).

BR 2806 Update

- It was agreed at the annual diving books review meeting in Oct 92 that a new edition will be published in mid-93. The new BR 2806 will be in 2 volumes and will replace the existing BR 2806 and BR 2806 (Supplement). In general terms, Volume 1 will include theory, records and pay, medical and experimental diving regulations while Volume 2 will cover safety regulations, conduct of diving operations, breathing apparatus drills, decompression and illness. Vol 2 will be required at the site of the dive.
- Looking ahead, a new pocket-sized aide-memoire for clearance diving supervisors is being drafted which will dispense with the need to carry the full BR 2806 and will include blank pages for personal notes. Introduction will obviously reduce the sales of pocket photograph albums.

From The Inspector of Clearance Diving—WO(D) CRANG

First I would like to thank Warrant Officer Kidman for the handover he gave me and his few words of kind encouragement (or was it consolation) which were almost put as if I had won a booby prize at a raffle, "Its all yours, don't ever think you're finished!" Well, I agree with everything you told me, Scouse.

BR 2807 Series

Now to business, in my travels I have received many complaints concerning the BR 2807 Series of diving equipment handbooks. Much to popular disbelief (although we do try) it is not the Inspectorate's remit to amend this BR Series on our own since it is not a CINCFLEET operator publication but belongs to DGUW(N). Judging by the number of complaints I would imagine there are hundreds of S2022s being raised, but sadly this is not the case. Come on fellas, if you see something wrong please raise an S2022 with a solution where possible. That being said, the Inspectorate staff have been ploughing through the books to identify necessary amendments.

S.288 Diving Record Book

The arrival of the amended revision of Form S.288 (DSM 27/92) has highlighted a few areas of ambiguity. Here a few of the most common questions answered:

- Q "Why do we need a new S.288?"
 A "Every diving contractor shall in respect of each diving operation: provide a diving operations log book, which is to be maintained in accordance with Regulation 6, and shall keep it for at least two years after the date of the last entry". This is an abstract from The Diving Operations at Work Regulations 1981 (Amended 1990). The armed forces are subject to these regulations and in order to comply with this regulation it was necessary to amend the S.288.
- Q "Why is the new revision similar to the old sized version?"
 A The Record Book was designed around the old revision for ease of handling and simplicity of recording.
- Q "What information is required in the Type of Dive box?"
 A The definitions in BR 2806 Art 2101 apply (i.e. Marked Diving etc.)
- Q "When using DSSCCA, what is the flow and endurance?"
 A "Demand" and "2 Equalisations (2EQU)" respectively.
- Q "When marked swimming what information is required in the attendants box?"
 A The names of any surface support crew other than the already identified standby diver/attendant. Note: when marked swimming in pairs takes place each member of the pair acts as attendant for the other (see BR 2806

Art2303Table. Note (i)) but these names are already included in the S.288.

- Q "Is it a requirement to record a test dive carried out in a chamber?"
- A Yes, under test dive and annotated "compression chamber test dive" in remarks column or "CC" immediately before Test Dive.

Inspections of Shore-based Units—Common Weak Areas

The annual diving Inspections of Clearance Diving Units conducted during 1992 have shown that, in the main, Units operate effectively and safely. The Top 10 list of common weak points are given below:

Administration and Documentation

1. More attention must be paid to the standard of entry in S. 1627 Divers Logs. All entries must be countersigned by the supervisor with his name and establishment written in (BR 2806 Art 5106 refers). Cases of fraudulent entries have been discovered in 1992 and so it is in your own interests to ensure the required details are entered correctly. For this reason any gaps between entries are to be ruled through.
2. Supervisors must continue to complete the S.288 Diving Record Book diligently, especially the details of the standby diver and (unbelievably) the depth of the dive neither of which have been entered in some cases.

Motor Transport

3. The drivers name and task must be entered for all journeys in the right hand column of the VUR in accordance with MT Circular 19A/89 (highlighted again by MT Circular 35/92).

Diving Set Self-Contained Clearance Diving

4. DSSCCD Maintenance Area's are to be COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessed in accordance with DSM 10/92. A copy of this assessment is to be posted inside the entrance to the room or is to be immediately available in the area of assessment.
5. The appropriate Material Safety Data Sheets are to be posted or immediately available in the maintenance room (i.e. FRIGEN/FREON solvent, manometer fluid, soda lime, Panaclean 856 and general cleaning detergent).

Haskell Air-Operated Gas Booster Pumps

6. Numerous pumps were found to be out-of-date and in need of refurbishment. Haskell Booster Pumps



● Con-Rod Big End Bearing—No oil in the Gas

are to be returned with Record Sheets every 30 months for refurbishment in accordance with BR 28074(4)(A) Sect 2 Chap 4 para 16 and PMS 7-2548-000 M Op 8.

Breathing Gas Cylinders

7. A cylinder log (in book or stateboard format) is to be maintained in accordance with BR 2807(4)(A). Numbers, serial numbers and test dates are to be recorded.
8. Large numbers of breathing gas cylinders are not fitted with blanking plugs. These are to be fitted to cylinders when not in use in accordance with BR 2807(4)(A) Sect 1.
9. Valve protection caps must be fitted to storage cylinders at all times in accordance with BR 2807(4)(B) Cat 5 Chap 1 page 1.3.

Engineering

10. Two sets of ear defenders and goggles are to be made available at all charging cylinder points in accordance with BR 2000 (20) Art 1115 Para 9.

Diving Safety

Fortune has smiled on all of us who dived beneath the sea during 1992 in that few incidents have occurred. This shows the high level of training and expertise in the Branch today. All that being said, one incident involving a diver who had not eaten a meal in excess of 16 hours is worthy of comment. The specific details cannot be mentioned but the important points are that fasting may lower the glucose level and render the diver symptomatic with light-headedness, fatigue and tremors. This may predispose a diver to a diving accident.

Attention is drawn to BR 2806 Article 2361 in that it is the divers responsibility to ensure he is fit to dive without effect from alcohol/drugs. Article 2361.3 specifies the equal important point that divers should not dive on an empty stomach.

From The Inspector of Ships Diving—WO(D) OULDS

Here are some helpful safety pointers that I have observed during Pre-OST visits to ships:

- A. Surface Swimmers. Many ships are using unqualified attendants as surface swimmers when conducting Search-scheme 'A' (necklace search). This is seemingly a good idea but it must be remembered that the surface swimmer is the link between the dive supervisor and the divers. The surface swimmer must therefore be able to act/react in the event of an incident and must know how to lead and control the search as well as being able to search the hull themselves. Supervisors, if you are using unqualified persons to supplement your diving team make sure that they can do the following:
- (i) Swim in UWSS and fins using a snorkel in a tideway.
 - (ii) Pass, receive and know the meaning of the divers signals.
 - (iii) Assist divers in an emergency, knowing the relevant drills and why they are required.

All this can be conducted onboard and will assist those waiting selection test or Ships Diver Course.

B. Diving Boat Coxswains. It is of benefit to all Ships Diving Teams if all the divers qualify as Gemini coxswains. This can be achieved locally in accordance with FLAGO's Chap 17. Advantages are:

- (i) It reduces the number of persons in the diving boat.
- (ii) There is usually better control and understanding of where the boat should be in relation to the divers.
- (iii) It increases the efficiency of the diving team by allowing any person in the boat to be the coxswain.

Final Note

The Diving Inspectorate is able to assist in more ways than you think. Call for advice and continue to dive safely in '93.

MCM1

MCM1 GROUP DEPLOYMENT TO THE BALTIC

By Lt Cdr Andy Davies and Lt Willie Beresford

The On Call Force operate as a team and workup together to hone their skills and get to know one another. MCM1, Commander Martin Littleboy is in charge of the Group 11 OCF for the period September '92 until March 93 and a deployment to the Baltic took place 31 Aug-4 Nov to exercise with foreign naval units, maintain and improve the operational standards achieved during workup and visit an area which has undergone major political upheaval following the breakup of the former Soviet Union and the ensuing independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In all eleven port visits were completed during the deployment.

The group comprising HMS LEDBURY commanded by Lt Cdr Peter Lewis, HMS BROCKLESBY commanded by Lt Cdr Simon Snowball sailed from Rosyth on 31 Aug with MCM1 Squadron Staff embarked. The Staff comprised MCM1 Cdr Littleboy, SOO Lt Cdr Andy Davies, SEO Lt Willie Beresford, SCPO CPO(MW) Ron Bashford, SCY Mark Pottage and SLWtr Andy Roxburgh. The rough weather and strong tail wind made delaying tactics

much to the delight of the locals and didn't come last. Enroute to Copenhagen a passex was conducted with the Danish Navy. This included 36 hours dedicated minehunting in the Aalbeck Bight, an area known to contain WW2 German mines. HMS DULVERTON duly located and marked a German GC mine for the Danish diving teams much to the disappointment of many new joiners who wished to witness a large bang! All three ships successfully managed to avoid the numerous fishing boats in this restricted area. Nothing can be said about Copenhagen that is not already known except that it was enjoyed by all. Norwegians do their shopping there as its cheaper and the rugby team were narrowly defeated by the Exiles on the pitch; however in traditional style they annihilated the opposition in the third half.

Batteries were recharged on the passage up the Baltic to Rauma in Finland (on the east side of the Gulf of Bothnia). This was a much smaller town than the previous ports of call with less nightlife and activity but being less frequently visited by Naval units they were very welcoming, organised a lot of tours and

but inexperienced men with a sprinkling of older men of Soviet regime background. All were Estonian natives and fiercely patriotic with no love for Russians. The prices were low on arrival but rose steeply day by day indicating that the traders could readily adapt to Western style trading. There were many bargains still to be had ranging from Russian dolls in the poorly stocked shops to military memorabilia available as you walked from entrepreneurs! Many people spoke good English particularly the older generation. Extensive national press coverage was experienced particularly when 600 pairs of British combat boots were handed over as a gift to the Border Guard and many people visited the ships when they were open to the public, (autographs were part of the gangway staff's duties).

The pace hotted up with only a 2 day passage to Visby on the island of Gotland, Sweden. (SEO by this time was beginning to hallucinate and it was decided to sub him with the younger fresher SMEOWOMEA Clive Adshead, or so we thought.) In many ways similar to Rauma, Visby is a small holiday town with narrow streets and small well presented houses. Nobody goes to Sweden to



● Members of three ships companies took part in a Dragon Boat Race in Oslo

necessary to maintain the planned ETA in Oslo.

Oslo was a fascinating though expensive visit with typical Scottish style weather to make sure nobody forgot their roots. On arrival there was a veterans parade at which King Harald unveiled a statue and the group provided a platoon of 30 Junior and Senior rates who performed admirably. After the parade there was a reception hosted by the Minister of Defence at which MCM1 was presented to the King (we did get him back later!). A team competed in the annual Dragon Boat Race

were most insistent that everyone experienced the Finnish sauna.

It was claimed that the last known "visit" by RN vessels was a less friendly one during the Crimean War. The group had extensive front page press coverage including MCM1's exploits on the judo mat. (Sporting!)

Onward from Rauma we had the first of the visits to the newly independent Baltic States, Tallinn in Estonia. The visit was organised direct by the Foreign Ministry whose representatives comprised young enthusiastic

buy alcohol and a visit to a bar provided a quick reminder why. However as we all know the main object of life in the RN is to be seen off as much and as often as possible! The visit was extremely busy with many organised events hosted by the Swedish military, driving Centurion tanks, firing missiles (simulated only alas) and surviving, just, the thrills of fast patrol boats. A farewell dinner party had the hosts in medieval costume, no cutlery (fingers only), bread as a plate (no heads-up on this which proved messy), jesters, dancers, fire eaters and an old crone and a knight on horseback. Possibly the best entertainment of the trip!



● *Commander Martin Littleboy (left) and Captain Gaidis Zeibots, chief of the Latvian Navy, catch up on each other's news while in Riga, Latvia.*

Picture courtesy of Dundee Courier.

It was then back across the Baltic to Klaipeda in Lithuania the third largest city in the country and main port. A warm welcome in the shape of dancers and band on the jetty contrasted sharply with the weather. The town itself was almost flattened during the war and is therefore fairly modern in architecture. The hosts wanted us to see all of their country both the good and the not so good. On to Riga, the capital of Latvia, which showed no war damage and in fact has many beautiful buildings in good condition. Prices were cheap, except in the hard currency shops and bistros, and remained constant during the visit. The group participated in another ceremony this time at the Latvian Freedom Memorial, an impressive monument built in 1939 and surviving the Soviet regime by dint of swift talking by the Latvians.

The Latvians had also requested we visit Liepaja their major port and that was the next stop. It is currently a large Russian Naval Base and the Latvians are keen to see them leave.

Overall impressions of the Baltic States are varied. All three are striving to find their feet both economically and politically. The people are used to having their job and plodding along with what is available and are now finding that the people in a capitalist society do not have it all their own way and actually work quite hard to achieve the perceived higher standard of living and possessions. Unemployment was an unknown concept and prices are rising sharply, causing great consternation. The main second language is Russian and whereas Estonians spoke some English, Lithuanians and Latvians relied heavily on interpreters. There are many very beautiful buildings, mostly Hanseatic in style, mixed with the pretty drab communist architecture. Shops in all the states are drab, poorly stocked and presented and it is necessary to enter to see what is or isn't on offer (maybe a good marketing play after all!).

Many shops are simply prefabricated stalls in the streets and black marketeers are everywhere carrier bags at the ready with watches, military uniforms, belts, postcards and yet strangely enough no RN officers caps which went walkabout! In general it would be tempting to tell the next person who tries to flog me a copy of The Socialist Worker (or Rangers News) that they should visit these places to see the results of Socialism before trying to convert others.

The next stop was Warnemuende, the port for Rostock in the former East Germany. Although there are still many signs of the struggle to

unite the two halves of Germany, it was good to see some signs of our Western way of life, most noticeable well stocked shops with items on display in the windows and smiling waitresses willing to please! Two groups travelled on day trips to Berlin, with four hour coach tours of East and West Berlin, including Checkpoint Charlie.

Three days of exercises proved a welcome respite before calling into Kiel. Kiel proved to be relaxing and most people took the opportunity to recover from previous exertions. Slightly frayed is the best description of how the majority felt and stamina had been tested to the full. MCM1 had brought his new toy on the trip, a Concept 2 Rowing Ergometer (gut busting rowing machine) and organised a sponsored row during the transit through the Kiel Canal with the aim of beating the ships over the 97k distance using "volunteers" on his Staff. The event started as the lines were let go to leave the entry lock and ships and the death machine vied for position throughout the transit and it was only by shortening the work periods in the saddle that a late burst took the surviving rowers past the finish line 10 seconds ahead! Staff were stiff but alive next day and a considerable amount was raised for ships charities and Stirling Rowing Club.

The final stop was Amsterdam, a regular watering hole for RN ships, where some wives and girlfriends managed to visit and attend a Rocky Horror Show event but you would have to ask Chris Ashcroft (BRO) about that! It was suitably fresh on return to Rosyth on the 4th Nov, lone piper on the jetty and COMMW counting the ships and looking at bleary eyes. A summary of the trip is that it was extremely hard work socially and physically, (no I didn't expect there would be any sympathy), but while every visit was enjoyable some were interesting rather than fun!



● *LS Geoff Palmer (from Redcar—left) and AB Alan Booth (from Manchester) showing Latvian soldiers over HMS LEDBURY. In the background are BROCKLESBY (left) and DULVERTON.*

DIVING FROM THE ROCK

ORANGES GALORE

From Captain L J D Callow BEM MIPR R IRISH

Thousands of oranges were emptied into the Bay of Algeciras off Gibraltar today, to simulate massive oil pollution and test emergency services' responses.

More than 40 kilos of oranges were pumped into the water from Shell Gibraltar's chartered ship 'Black Adder'. The Exercise, initiated by Shell as part of company wide training, was designed to cover the critical four hour period at the beginning of any oil spill. 'These first four hours are vital, when communications have to be established, the crisis has to be managed and a credible response to the spill established' said Alex Trinidad, Shell's spokesman.

Lieutenant Commander Chris Hooker, Assistant Queen's Harbour Master, who has recently arrived on the Rock for a two year appointment, organised the Naval response.

'This type of training is very worthwhile', said Chris 'as lessons learnt on exercise, go a long way toward making sure that we get it right for the real thing.'

After four hours, the oranges were safely rounded up - sadly though, after that long in the water, not even the Rock's famous Barbary Apes would touch them.



● Able Seaman Diver Lee Murphy (23) from the Isle of Sheppy, Kent breaks for an early lunch during the pollution exercise.

NEW DIVING HQ

Pictured here celebrating the opening of their new Diving HQ are Chief Diver Jim Carlin, Leading Diver Will Sharp, Leading Diver Bruno Searl, Able Diver Chris Avill, Able Diver Spud Murphy and Petty Officer Paul Henderson, the team make up the Naval Clearance Diving Unit in Gibraltar.

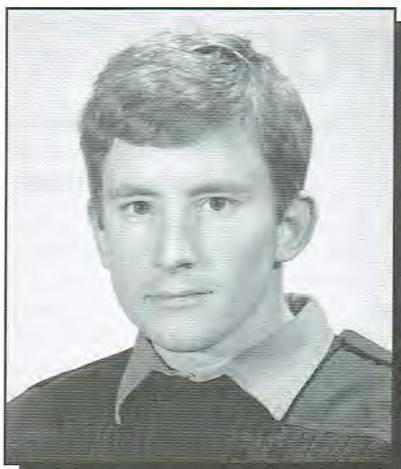
Their new Headquarters was opened recently by Rear Admiral Jeremy Sanders who also presented a Gulf Medal to Leading Diver Bruno Searl and a Commander British Forces Commendation, to Able Diver Chris Avill.

Chris earned the commendation earlier last year for the part he played in saving the life of a Spanish Coral Diver who had contracted a bad case of the "Bends". Chris treated the injured diver in the Decompression Chamber pictured here for over 34 hours, under extremely arduous conditions.

Photo by SACW Jules Hague.



Diving Reporter



● **DIVING REPORTER AB(D)**
KEVIN AMAIRA

GIBRALTAR DIVERS IN AT THE DEEP END

A young Spaniard Diving off the coast of Morocco recently probably owes his life to the Gibraltar Royal Naval clearance Diving Unit after he contacted bad spinal bends, when ascending at speed from a depth of over 50 metres.

An unprecedented Joint Operation involving Morocco, Spain and Gibraltar led to Senior Martin a 24 year old diver from Northern Spain, being landed on the Rock by a Spanish helicopter and transferred to the Royal Navy Decompression Chamber for 36 hours.

"He arrived in a portable one man decompression chamber and was in a bad

way", said Chief Petty Officer Jim Carlin, the Rock's Chief Diver". It was a delicate operation to transfer him to our much larger chamber, involving rapid decompression—but that was a chance we had to take" he added.

Jim and his team then worked round the clock for two and a half days with RN doctors. Taking it in turns to enter the chamber with Senior Martin: However, Able Seaman Diver Chris Avill deserves a special mention, he had to remain locked in the Chamber with the Spaniard for 36 hours, changing intravenous drips and giving routine medication.

The present two man chamber has only been installed in Gibraltar since the New Year and is one of the best facilities available for hundreds of miles around.



● **Gibraltar Clearance Team from l. to r.:**
Paul Henderson POMEM, Lee Murphy A/B(D), Robert Daniels L/S(D), Chris Avill A/B(D).

Photo by: LA (Phot) Dave Thexton

This "ancient" photograph was recently purchased at an antiques market in Essex. On the back is written "Navy Week 6/8/36, Best Regards Diver Jock". The purchaser would be interested to know if any of our more elder statesmen recognise any one in the boat, or whether anyone can identify the location. Answers please to the Editor.



OBITUARY

It is with sadness that PCDU must inform the Clearance Diving Branch of the death of Ex PO(Diver) Dave (Steve) STEVENS. He died after a long debilitating illness that sadly he thought he had beaten on two occasions.

I wish to thank the Branch on behalf of his wife Heather for the splendid support the branch has shown in their financial gifts to her chosen charity. So far over £350 has been raised.

A personal letter to all Units involved will be sent when it is known just how much has been presented.

**Chris Ballinger
CPO(D)**



Commandos . . .

SNICDU PLAY COMMANDOS AND BADDIES

By Lieut D P Ince

Participating as enemy forces during exercises seems to be unofficially written in to the divers' terms of reference. Therefore, when SNICDU were asked if they could provide 'commandos' to attack a service establishment there was no shortage of volunteers.

The plan was simple; "get in if you can, provide fire support for an airborne assault and expect to die in a loud, grotesque military manner at the hands of the Royal Marines". This is what happened . . .

The cold night air steamed on their breath as they crawled through the bogs and puddles. At this stage the 'mission' had the distinct feel of an attack swim, even though SNICDU were not usually this desperate for minutes! The radio crackled into life and the report came in that LS(D) Ben Cartwright had just been captured and AB(D) Whitney Hooson was currently evading the MOD Police. Their covert

insertion and hence mission to ambush the reinforcing marines had been thwarted. The Boss II, Lt Dave Ince stopped the team inside the tree line whilst he recce'd ahead to the perimeter fence to place the explosives. LS(D) Happy Merry and AB(D) Ginga Rintoul remained in cover and out of sight from the surveillance cameras, three of which were in plain view. The cameras themselves were evil looking things mounted between infrared lights, sitting astride fifty foot towers and looking for all the world like they had been taken from the film set of Robocop. With the explosives in place, Happy was called in with the firing cable but, before he had managed to slither far, the sound of servo motors froze him to the spot. The surveillance cameras whirled into life and vectored in on the hapless Happy.

With the distant chatter of helicopter rotors invading the still pre-dawn air, all pretence of being clandestine was dropped. Happy

ran to the fence, the cameras following his movements. Up to this stage the police monitoring the screens were unaware that the suspicious people near the perimeter were in fact armed 'terrorists'. They had already dispatched an unarmed patrol to investigate the activity. Happy reached the fence and the surprise of the police monitors was almost noticeable as the aperture in the camera visibly widened to take in two armed extremists and a fence wired to blow! They frantically made a call to the on route patrol to return but it was too late. A power-cut, courtesy of AB(D) Mac McSkimmings came down on the establishment like an executioner's axe. The ensuing bedlam and confusion was complete. With a blinding flash and earth rending boom the three man team were through the perimeter fence, across the razor wire and running full tilt up the hill to their fire support position . . . straight into the unarmed police patrol. Unfortunately, the Plods were mercilessly gunned down

● *Lieut Dave Ince acting as a "Baddie"*



... Baddies

just minutes before their shift ended, the look of utter astonishment on their faces a sight to be remembered.

The helo had successfully landed the assault troops who had subsequently achieved their objective and retreated to covered positions by the time fire support had been set up. No matter, the arriving Bootnecks were completely pinned down and were loath to move forward for fear of their SAWES equipment being set off. The resultant fire fight was to last a good hour with many a brave Marine and the entire helo assault force dying horribly! The fire support team were accosted by the odd unarmed policemen who still had not really got the message that something was very definitely amiss! On one occasion a policeman thought he would get the last laugh and released his somewhat hungry and agitated Alsatian dog. Blanks fired from the SA80s did not have the desired effect and the now extremely agitated animal continued its advance determined to salvage some dignity for its master. The team now appreciated the gravity of the situation as the 'game' umpire was scrabbling up a nearby tree! As a last resort explosive 'doggy' biscuits (alias the thunderflash) were hurled toward the now rabid and completely irrational beast. The foaming and snarling nemesis instantly reversed its course and 'billy big stepped it' back down the hillside with howls of indignation, tail firmly clamped between its legs and looking for all the world like the proverbial slapped puppy!

No further defence was offered and the expected re-inforcement Marines had still not fronted up. With ammunition now running short, the fire support team decided to beat a retreat back to the still smouldering perimeter. Unchallenged and unmolested, they made good their escape to fight another day. The following morning the Boss II had several request forms to transfer to special forces on his desk . . . well, it must be a cinch!



● *The rest of the baddies*



Notes from the Warfare Office

SMCDO's CORNER

PERSONNEL

As usual there have been a few changes on the Man/Womanpower scene. Lieutenant Jennifer GORRINGE has gone west and deep and has been relieved by Lieutenant Anne LUCAS as the Staff Analysis Officer (in the forenoon—in the afternoons she sails, runs and plays Basketball for the Navy!). The tall CPO(MW) has been relieved by the not-so-tall Pete CAWSEY as the Assistant Minewarfare Development Officer. Chief CLARK has returned to MCM1, whence he came in 1989. Paula MASON has been relieved by WWA Tanya JARDINE as SANO's worker-bee. Paula is now analysing big missiles in Portsmouth and, with the demise of the Weapon Analyst Branch, Tanya will probably be the last WWA in the post which will be taken eventually by a civilian Assistant Scientific Officer.

SOME CURRENT ISSUES

1. Amphibious Warfare. Since the revised UK Defence Strategy places great emphasis on Out-Of-Area operations, we are working closely with the Commodore Amphibious Warfare (COMAW) to examine how best to implement this policy. COMAW and his Staff have been briefed on the Concept of MCM Operations and they spent an illuminating day at sea in ATHERSTONE, seeing how we do our business. Cdre BRIDGES (COMAW) himself visited Rosyth in September. There is an ongoing programme of COMMW/EOD into Amphibious Exercises.

2. Operationally, the first question is "To what extent can we operate covertly?". Readers will realise that MCM operations cannot normally be described as covert but we are looking particularly at MCM/EOD in the approaches to the beach. Currently, the latter is the responsibility of RN Clearance Divers who are not routinely trained to operate covertly while the SBS, which normally operates covertly, is not trained in EOD. Watch this space!

3. The Hunt Class Mid-Life Update. This programme, which is endorsed for eight ships of the class and for which the other five are strong contenders, covers an update of the Weapon System, namely the sonar, the influence sweep, the AIO system and the vehicle. Consideration is also being given to making the ship a better minehunting platform by making it more manoeuvrable and there is an outside possibility (dare I say it) of improving the Junior Rates accommodation. There is a lot of work in studying the feasibility of various proposals and the effects of the options on each other. Don't hold your breath! Work on the first ship to be revamped is not programmed to start until 1998.

4. Operational Effectiveness. Noting the increased use of MCMVs in other than their primary roles, we are keen to maintain their Military Capability. To this end, more ships are being programmed for Weapon Practice Assessment periods, normally during Operation PIKE, when their minehunting capability and CIS effectiveness will be objectively assessed by the Analysis Staff. Further, Squadron Staffs will monitor ships' progress by running a 3-5 day Sea Training and Operational Assessment Time (STOAT) as near as possible to the mid-point of the 18 month period between OST. Don't think the Squadron Staffs will get away lightly—they are to be visited periodically by the Flotilla Staff when their MCMTA is activated.

Lt Cdr J. R. Staveley
SMCDO

STAFF MCM OFFICER UPDATE

Well here I am firmly in the chair. John Docherty has now retired and having obtained his Master Of Business Administration (MBA) is employed by Marconi Marine Ltd. We all wish him well for the future.

So what has drastically changed since the last report from this desk? With the exception of the introduction of the Warfare Branch, which has

been fairly well publicised very little. The Squadron Chiefs can no longer give local Gemini tickets. Every Gemini coxswain must complete the recognised course. What is likely to happen in the future is the introduction of a power-boat instructors course. The intention will be for the Squadron CPO and ship's bo'sun to qualify as a power boat instructor thereby giving them the authority to sign part two of the coxswain's certificate. The recently introduced COMMW Standardisation Visits have proven to be a most valuable three or four days for the MCMTA team, and in particular the CPO(MW)(O). To date all have reported that the experience of being put in the hot seat has been well worth while. Participation in major MCM exercises seem to be getting less and less, therefore the opportunity to set up the MCMTA, even if it is only in Rosyth, allows the team to consolidate their knowledge as a Squadron Staff.

RCMDS project managers have asked me once again to remind all of the importance of forwarding not only run report forms but also S2022 when even minor defects are found..

Bob Baker
WO(MW)(O)

SANO UPDATE

The Analysis Office has been quite busy since July '92, with a PIKE in September and various BOST/COSTS (not to mention trying to find space for even more computers in our tiny office!) The PIKE in September was Lt Anne Lucas' first trip and my fifth (and last) to Campbeltown.

With a day off (due to numerous defects and the bad weather) at the beginning of the programme we wondered just what attractions Campbeltown held in store for us other than the vast number of Public Houses, fantastic shopping centre and amazing cuisine (Chinese Restaurants) we had been told about. A trip to the Mull of Kintyre was called for and what an experience it turned out to be—the gale force winds, the pounding rain and thrashing sea below us (what happened to the "mist rolling in from the sea" . . .?)—we were just itching to get out there and do our stuff!

After spending one night in HMS ATHERSTONE and achieving—well, not much to be honest—we were then allowed to leave Campbeltown for two days (yes, weekend!) and to return on the following Monday to start all over again. When the programme was changed for what we hoped was the final time, it meant spending a colossal four days at sea—did we have enough Stugeron? Although the first couple of days were interrupted by various system failures and poor weather conditions (frustrating for everyone) we eventually got down to some serious minehunting.

We were made to feel most welcome on all the ships, thanks for your hospitality. Mustn't forget the team at MCM2 who did everything in their power to get the ships through the WPA field and made everything run so smoothly after all the problems at the beginning.

Before I close, I'd like to say that I have enjoyed my time at COMMW and hope that Tanya enjoys it as much, oh and before I forget: to my favourite Squadron Chief, I have that recipe you wanted!!

LWRN(WA) Paula Mason



Divers (Golfing) Dits

SIMPLY THE BEST

By Mo Crang

The 7th, and simply the best Royal Navy Divers Golf Championship saw SUB-LIEUT. Tug Wilson come from behind to win the inaugural Medal Championship sponsored by AVON RUBBER LTD. In windy conditions the AM leader James Jimmy Lynch could not match the PM 75 Wilson put together. The older and certainly equal Fullerton Sherwood Stableford Championship was won by Dave Southwell with back to back 35s.

The real winner of the championship, however, was ex-Leading Diver Mike Marten, who broke his spine in a water skiing accident and is now confined to a wheelchair. The championship raised £260 towards a racing wheelchair for Mike, in which he plans to complete for charity in marathons. The majority of the cash came via Clearways Explosives' sponsorship of the 7th hole—where they offered a gallon of whisky for the nearest the pin! The lucky winner—Darren Nice.

The event has grown tremendously over the years, shown by this years participating numbers reaching 80 golfers. The success due to the committee which includes "Johnny" John Dadd and James "Jimmy" Lynch and the companies and friends who so generously sponsored the event. The Committee would also like to thank Shep Woolley for providing outstanding entertainment at the evening

barbecue, according to his golfing partners his golf was just as funny!

A quick word on this years championship which is to be held once again at Southwick Park on the 9th August: There will be a limit of 90 players and 120 adults for the evening function on a strict first cheque first served basis including quests. There were also no less than 20 personnel who withdrew last year which prevented many from entering. For this reason and for financial planning there will be no refunds for any cancellation in the last week.

Other winners for 1992 were:
 Haskell Energy Systems 1st Division Winner—J Lynch
 MSI Defence Systems Ltd 2nd Division Winner—D Sandiford
 Interspiro Guests Champion—F C Dodd
 The Solvent Divers Team Trophy—The GAS
 EC Hopkins Pairs Championship—P Hargrave and G Birch
 Crestbury Automarine Ltd Sporting Trophy—Dave Elliss
 Michael Fellows Longest Drive—S Teal
 Dave Bartlett Most Golf Balls Lost—Clive Boy Thomas
 Spanset 1st Division Guests Trophy—P Hargrave
 David Williams Engraving Trophy—B Nichols
 Walnut Tree Glass Trophy—M Owen



● Left to right: S/Lt Tug Wilson, CPO Dave Southwell, Pincher Martin

ROYAL NAVAL CLEARANCE DIVERS GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP 1993

VENUE— Southwick Park (Naval Recreation Centre)
DATE— 0730 Monday 9th August 1993 (Tee times available late July)
COST— £12 for divers (members of SPNRC Golf Club) £22 for divers (non-member of SPNRC Golf Club) and Guests.
 Cost includes entrance fee and green fees, luncheon and morning coffee.
 Evening Barbecue and Entertainment—£8 per person. (limit 120 first cheque first served basis).

CLEARANCE DIVERS ENTRY FORM

Name & Initials _____ Present/retirement rank/rate _____

Handicap _____ Golf Club (if not Southwick G/C) _____

Service or home address: _____

Telephone No: _____

Tick one—chicken & chips _____ sausage & chips _____ soup & ploughmans _____

Entrance fee: Member (£12) _____ Non-Member (£22) _____ Amount £ _____

Evening Barbecue and Entertainment (£8 per head) x No. _____ Amount £ _____

If applicable, do you wish to play with your Guest (If yes the pairing will be at the highest handicap. YES / NO

There will be a limit of 90 players on a strict first cheque first served basis including guests. No post dated cheques. Priority will be given to present and past Clearance Divers up until 1st June 1993 with last entries 1 July 1993 or before if limit is reached. Cheques made payable to "THE RN DIVERS GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP".

Point of contact—WO(D) M J Crang on BT 753751 or PNB 24866.
 Applications to WO(D) M J Crang, HQ Fleet Diving Group, HMS Nelson (Gunwharf), Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 3HH.

GUESTS APPLICATION FORM

Name & Initials _____

Handicap _____ Golf Club (if not Southwick G/C) _____

Tick one—chicken & chips _____ sausage & chips _____ soup & ploughmans _____

Entrance Fee £22 Amount £ _____

Evening Barbecue and Entertainment (£8 per head) x No _____ Amount £ _____ Total = £ _____

FOUR BALL COMBINED STABLEFORD TEAM APPLICATION FORM (GUESTS INCLUDED).

Only one team member to fill this application form. Players not identified will be teamed up automatically.

Name of Team _____ Team members _____

Letters to the Editor



“Minewarfare and Diving” welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be addressed to the Editor and should include a daytime telephone number. Please cite page reference and edition for any article mentioned. Letters may be faxed to: 0705-822351-24705. Letters not intended for publication should be clearly marked as such. Where possible authorities or Units involved in correspondence will be given the automatic right of reply in the same edition.

Dear Editor,

It is said that a mine used in Naval warfare is a device designed to explode against a ship with the intent to destroy it.

An American, Mr. David Bushell, who is widely accepted as the inventor of the underwater mine.

It was he who discovered that as long as it was kept dry, gunpowder would explode underwater.

And it was during the War of Independence (1776) that his ideas were put into operation much to the dismay of the British Admiralty, for several ships were sunk by these methods.

Another American, Mr. Robert Fulton was also of the same inventive mind and his efforts were used in the times of the French Revolution, about 1797.

So! does this give the first World War (1914-18) for the first mines some doubt ???

I refer to the article in Volume 2, No. 2, 1st July 1992 page 7, which I received yesterday with grateful thanks. Again, during the conflict in Denmark in 1848-51, the Prussians used electrically controlled mines to protect Kiel harbour - a forerunner to the magnetic mine, I wonder? The Russians laid extensive minefields at the Baltic ports Kronstadt and Bomersund and this was during the Crimean War, 1854-56 and they, with the help of Alfred Nobel brought into use the horned mine, which detonated when a ship struck a hollow lead horn that had a glass phial filled with sulphuric acid and surrounded by a chemical mixture of sugar and potassium chlorate and when this was broken the reaction caused a flame which in turn ignited the main charge - how far removed from today's moored mines?

There is so much documentation about these matters and so many varying dates as to when they were first used but certainly the above gives credence to them being very early indeed, some even lay the blame on Callinicus of Heliopolis in 668 BC with his infamous Greek Fire!!!

I do read with great interest all your articles on Minesweeping, having spent 5 years on war-time trawlers and 23 years on the wonderful 'Ton Class' in the Royal Naval Reserve - keep it up! MDT Dept. of SMOPS, it's great reading.

Yours Aye,

W.J. Davies BEM., CPO RNR Ret.



Dear Editor,

BIG BADGE CHALLENGE V HMS PICKLE

The story of HMS PICKLE is one that has considerable association with the Warrant Officers and Chief Petty Officers Mess, HMS NELSON.

Attached is the story of PICKLE and its involvement at the Battle of Trafalgar. The association with the Mess started on the 6th November 1974, when the Mess held a Mess Dinner, the Guest of Honour being Commodore John Lea (later Admiral Sir John Lea) who at the time was Commodore of HMS VICTORY (RNB).

The significance of the date, 6th November was pointed out during the Commodore's speech as being the anniversary of when PICKLE arrived at Falmouth with Collingwood's despatches regarding the victory at Trafalgar and the death of Admiral Lord Nelson.

From that day in 1974, the Mess has held a PICKLE NIGHT Dinner on the nearest Friday to the 6th November. This is also becoming a growing tradition in other Senior Rates Messes similar to the tradition of Wardroom Trafalgar Nights.

NELSON's Guest of Honour last year (1991) was the man who sowed the seeds in the first place, Admiral Sir John Lea and this year the Second Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Michael Livesay KCB is honouring the Mess with his presence.

The format of Nelson's Dinner is a formal Mess Dinner with sections of the despatches following PICKLE from leaving Falmouth to its return being read by Mess Members.

The Mess has also furthered its association with PICKLE by naming its Bar the PICKLE INN, and its Christmas card depicts her in action at Trafalgar.

I trust this is what you are looking for and that it will be of interest to you and your readers,

Brian Wines, Warrant Officer
Mess President, WO's & CPO's Mess,
HMS NELSON
(ex-Chippy of RECLAIM 1964-66!!)

Editors Note: See HMS PICKLE page 37.



More Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for the copy of MAD - most interesting reading. I wonder whether you or any of your most knowledgeable readers could help me? I am trying to find a book or papers which set out the Minesweeping Formations and or signals used during the 1939-45 war. I have copies of some notes made by one of our association members which are tremendously interesting and contain a lot of information. However I am not able to put it fully into context without some official verification. I am sure that somewhere in that deep Vat of knowledge of your readers someone can assist me in my quest and furnish me with the title of the publications of the period which would give me the information I seek. Keep up the good work.

Yours Aye

Jack Williams

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

395 Lytham Road

BLACKPOOL

FY4 1EB

Dear Editor,

As my time within the Minewarfare Branch draws to a quiet end, I felt that I should put pen to paper and update those people who know me on my future movements. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank all those people that I have come into contact with during my Naval career for an interesting and varied lifestyle.

Whilst I am leaving the branch you will be delighted to know that I will not be leaving the Navy entirely. From the 5 Jan 93 I make a sideways entry into the Royal Navy Careers service and from that date take up my new appointment (Yes not drafted) at Birmingham Careers office. I have to say that I look forward to this new challenge with relish. Any CPO considering entering the Career service, who would like more information is more than welcome to contact me.

Turning to my second reason for writing this letter I would like to say that I have had the pleasure of serving with many outstanding people within the Minewarfare and Diving branches. I think it is also true to say that I have probably enjoyed myself more than most. Despite the fact that as a junior Seaman I spent almost six hours in HMS TERROR swimming pool, negative trunks. (I leave it to George T to explain.)

Thanks again for a good career. Best of luck for the future to you all.

Yours Aye

Paul Harmer



"SHIPS COMPANY DIVISIONS ARE ALWAYS MEANT AS A MORAL BOOSTER"

Dear Editor,

Given that as I write, the whole of MDT are about to depart on a coach enroute from GUNWHARF to DRYAD on a Friday afternoon to practise marching round and being shouted at in readiness for "Ships company divisions" My attention was drawn to an article in a local rag. The main theme of which is indicated. I ask therefore that we spare a thought for the poor sick mind that rests in the head of the Gunnery officer who made such a remark. On another tack, as I leave the RN shortly I would like to take this opportunity to say bye to one and all and also to say that its been real and its been fun, but it aint been real fun.

Yours Aye

Stan

Diving Theory



Dear Editor,

Well the younger members of the (MW) branch (or should I say (MW) (O)) has joined the 'Kollege of knowledge'. CPO 'Tony' Mulrain and PO 'Pony' Moore have arrived.

Our first task was to bring more some gaiety to the section. It was a hard job, but someone had to do it. 'Thomo' now smiles at least three times per day. (Visible through the cloud of smoke).

The main task which we have been employed in, is to perform the duties of Moral and Sports Officers. Once again this has been an immense task, as we had to over-come forcible opposition in the form of WO (MW) (O) Dixie Dean.

Dixie's only form of sport prior to us joining was attending the Thursday Meat Raffle. This has now been improved and he, without force of any regard to his own safety, drew the names to establish the section Squash Ladder! For this act we will be forever grateful.

We have a new attraction, which takes place on Thursdays. To over-come the new fitter, leaner section staff, there are 'Sticky Buns' every Thursday morning. These 'Stickys' are 'Mine Swept' (pardon the bun . . . oops that should be 'pun') by Tony's better half Caroline, every Wednesday night.

This is very much appreciated by the sweet toothed members of staff!

F.O.C.B. (Flag Officer Coffee Boat) 'Pete' Whitehead, had his once yearly good idea, being to collect donations for the 'Stickys'. This was duly acted upon and at this point he paid £5 and ate the lot. (5p a cake. Fat B-----d!)

The main message of this letter is to let people know that life in the 'school' is not all work. There is fun to be had here, as well as a job to be done. So Come Up and See Us Sometime.

Tony Mulrain

Pony Moore



Readers Response Page



Your Name

Your Rank/Rate

Your Job Title

Your Unit

Your Address

.....

.....

Your Tel No

Your FAX No

The Editor
 "Minewarfare and Diving" Magazine
 MDT Department of SMOPS
 HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF)
 Portsmouth
 Hants
 PO1 3HH
 FAX: 0705 822351 Ext 24705

Dear Editor,

1. I have read this edition from cover to cover and I think:
 - (a) It's terrific—keep up the good work
 - (b) It's OK—but you need more
 - (c) It's no good—because

2. Please find attached my contribution towards the continued success of "Minewarfare And Diving" Magazine. It is:
 - (a) a written article/Letter To The Editor, typed, double spaced and word-counted.
 - (b) a photograph /slide /diagram No. of items: of
 - (c) less than RESTRICTED in classification

3. I realise that the Magazine publication dates are 1 Jan/1 Jul of each year, and that by sending my article in today it will arrive at least six weeks before the next edition is due.
4. I would/would not like my material/contribution returned on completion of printing.
5. I understand that inclusion of my contribution, in whole or in part, is at the discretion of the Editorial Committee, but that if I am to be considered for either of the prizes associated with each edition, I must be prepared to have a "grip and grin" mugshot taken and published.

Yours.....

Signed.....



Challenge And Reply

BIG BADGE CHALLENGE V

ANSWERS TO BIG BADGE CHALLENGE V (BBC V)

Two replies were received in response to the Big Badge Challenge V in the July 1992 edition of the MAD Magazine. One from Mr "Jack Williams" of the Algerine Association. The other from WO Brian Wines Mess President WO/SRs mess HMS NELSON. Both answers refer to historical HM Ships called PICKLE but each vessel was of an entirely different class and background from the other. Their respective stories are published on pages 13 and 37 respectively. The next challenge is based on historic mines (see back cover). We are continually looking for items of interest which can be used as a challenge. The only stipulation is that they relate in some way to the Minewarfare or Diving branches.



HMS PICKLE AND HER INVOLVEMENT IN THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR - 1805 PARTICULARS

Displacement	127 tons
Length	73 ft
Beam	20 ft
Complement	40
Armament	eight 12 pounder carronades

The Schooner Pickle was built in Plymouth and originally was named "STING". Bought by the Royal Navy in 1800, she was re-named HMS PICKLE in 1802 the first ship to bear that name.

From December 1804 it was commanded by Lieutenant John Richards Lapenotiere aged 24. His family, of French origin, originally called itself La Penotiere. John was the son of an RN Lieutenant and came from Ilfracombe, Devon, he joined the navy in 1780 at the age of 10.

HMS PICKLE joined Nelson's Fleet on Tuesday 1st October 1805, 50 miles off Cadiz, after a fast passage from Plymouth covering approximately 1000 miles in 8 days. On 4th October Nelson sent PICKLE to help HMS EURYALUS and HMS HYDRA keeping vigil on the combined French and Spanish Fleet at anchor in Cadiz Harbour.

The combined Fleet put to sea from Cadiz on the 20th October and set a course for the strait of Gibraltar. In the bay of Trafalgar on the 21st October the Fleets engaged in battle. During the ensuing battle HMS PICKLE acted as an attendant picking up survivors and prisoners as ordered.

After the battle Vice Admiral Collingwood onboard HMS EURYALUS now in command of the fleet, decided to send his despatches home in the second smallest ship HMS PICKLE, Lapenotiere being a particular favourite of Collingwoods. On the 26th October, Lapenotiere, was instructed to take these despatches to England, for which he would receive £500 and his Commanders commission, the despatches dated 22nd October, were addressed to William Marsden, The Secretary to the Board of Admiralty. These letters referred to the victorious battle, the death of Nelson, the "highly meritorious conduct" of every man of the Fleet and the damage wrought on the prizes because of the ensuing gales, which forced the scuttling of the 130 gun Santissima Trinidad, flagship of the Spanish Fleet, the greatest warship ever built.

PICKLE set sail for England with a crew of 32 which included, 17 English, 9 Irish, 2 American, 1 Scot, 1 Welsh, 1 Norwegian, and 1 Channel Islander. After an eventful and hazardous journey impeded by gales, a flood when the ship was holed, lack of wind when the ships crew had to row to keep her on course at a steady speed of 2 knots, she arrived off Falmouth at 9.45 on 4th November. A jolly boat conveyed the Captain ashore and a postchaise took him onward to London, a journey of 266 miles.

Whilst underway from Cadiz to Falmouth a sail was noticed on the horizon, it was later identified as HMS NAUTILUS, commanded by Captain Sykes. The two ships hove too and the news of the victory and tragedy imparted. Sykes decided to warn the British Ambassador in Lisbon, after which he set sail for England as he considered that the conveyance of the news should not be left to HMS PICKLE alone in case of her misfortune.

HMS NAUTILUS had been following astern of PICKLE, arriving in Plymouth 12 hours after Lt Lapenotiere had departed from Falmouth.

PICKLE left Falmouth anchorage for Plymouth captained by Lt Kingdom the 2nd in command.

November fog on the outskirts of London slowed Lapenotiere's postchaise from a gallop to a crawl. At approximately one o'clock am (37 hours after setting out) on the 6th November the despatches were handed to William Marsden in the Board Room of the Admiralty at Whitehall.

Captain Sykes arrived later that same day.

News of the victory and the sad loss was printed in The Times on the 6th November, however it had already been reported in the Gibraltar Chronicle on the 24th October.

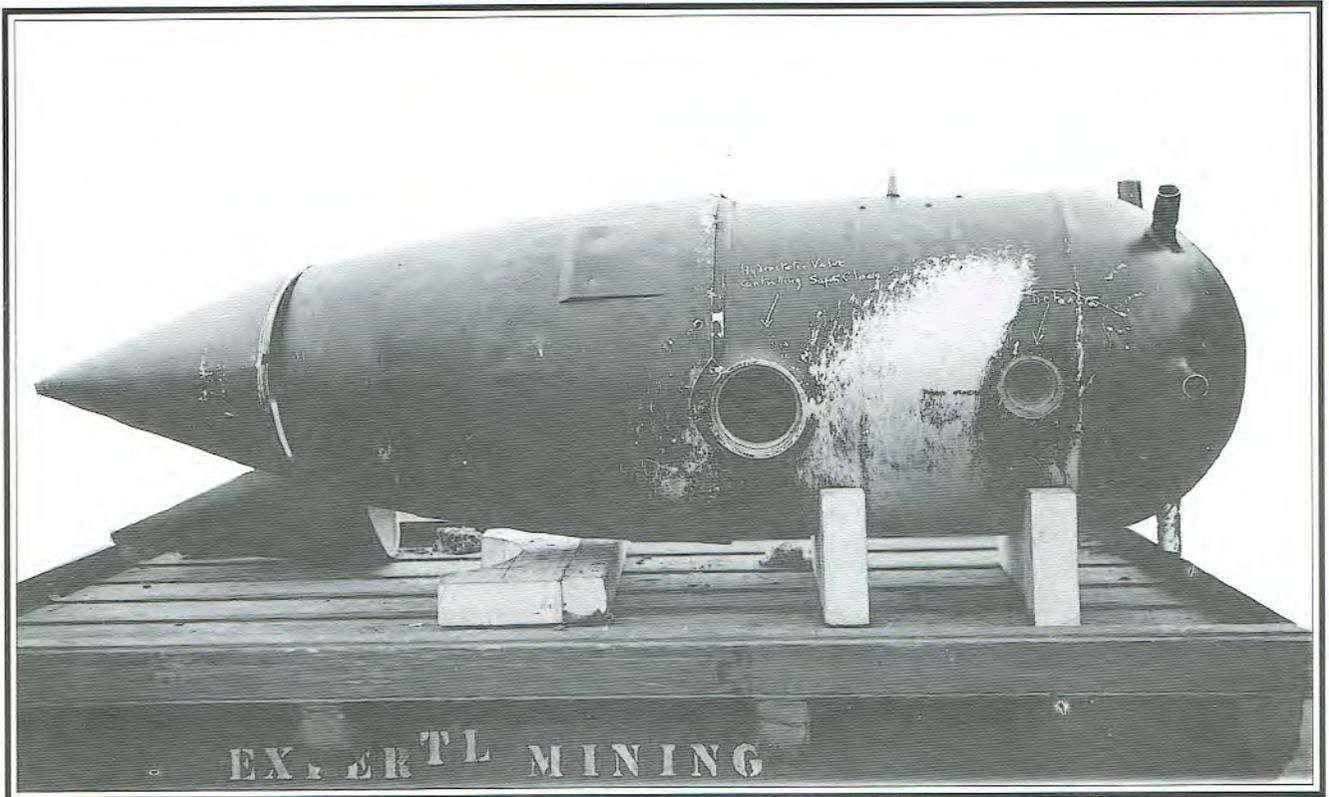
HMS PICKLE came to grief in 1808 when she was wrecked entering Cadiz harbour, just three years after the battle of Trafalgar.

Motto on Ships Crest: "Courage Grows Under Difficulty"

ENGLAND EXPECTS - DUDLEY POPE (1959)

MCDO ASSOCIATION TIES

Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officers' Association ties have been manufactured and are now ready for purchase. They are to a design agreed by the committee and are good value for money. The cost has yet to be determined but will be in the region of £6.00. These most desirable items of personal attire can be purchased from either: Lt Cdr (Frank) Ward, COMMW, Lochinvar Block, HM Naval Base, Royth, KY11 2YA. (Ext 62496) or OIC, FDU1, HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF) Portsmouth, Hants, PO1 3HH (24577).



BIG MINE CHALLENGE VI

The Mine illustrated above has a well documented, historical background. The challenge for this issue is: What? Why?. Please send your answers, dits and pics to The Editor MAD Magazine. The best replies will be published in the next edition of MAD. Stories generated from BIG BADGE CHALLENGE V (PICKLE) are on pages 37 and 38 of this edition.

Any badges/objects considered suitable for inclusion in future challenges, gratefully received and returned.